PUSEY'S MINOR PROPHETS

MICAH

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VOL. IV

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THE MINOR PROPHETS WITH A COMMENTARY

EXPLANATORY AND PRACTICAL, AND INTRODUCTIONS TO THE SEVERAL BOOKS

VOL. IV

MICAH

BY

THE REV. E. B. PUSEY, D.D.

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."—Ps. cxix.

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE

PROPHET MICAH

MICAH, or Micaiah, the Morasthite, was so called, probably, in order to distinguish him from his great predecessor, Micaiah, son of Imlah, in the reign of Ahab. His name was spoken in its fuller form, by the elders of the land whose words Jeremiah has preserved. And in that fuller form his name is known, where the Greek and Latin translations of the Scriptures are used.[1] By the Syrians and by the Jews[2] he is still called, as by us, Micah. The fullest and original form is Micaiahu, "who is like the Lord?" In this fullest form, it is the name of one of the Levites sent by Jehoshaphat to teach the

[1] Μιχαίας is used by the LXX in Jer. xxvi. 18, and Micah i. 1, as also in the other places where the name occurs, except Neh. xi. 17, 22, where for מיכא, they have Μιχά. Josephus calls both prophets Μιχαίας, Micah son of Imlah, Ant. 8, 14, 5, and our prophet, Ant. 10, 6, 2. The Vulgate uses for both, Michæas.

[2] They substituted מיכה in the Kri in Jeremiah.

people,[1] as also of the mother of King Asa [2] (the same name serving sometimes both for men and women). Then according to the habit of abridging names, in all countries, and especially those of which the proper name of the Lord is a part, it is diversely abridged into Micaihu, Micahu,[3] whence Micah is readily formed, on the same rule as Micaiah itself from Micaiahu. The forms are all found indifferently. The idolatrous Levite in the time of the Judges,[4] and the son of Imlah,[5] are both called in the same chapter *Micaihu* and *Micah;* the father of one of Josiah's officers is called *Micaiah* in the book of Kings,[6] *Micah* in the Chronicles.[7]

The Prophet's name, like those of Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, was significant. Joshua's, we know, was changed of set purpose.[8] The rest seem to have been given in God's Providence, or taken by the Prophets, in order to enunciate truths concerning God, opposed to the idolatries or self-dependence of the people. But the name of Micah or Micaiah (as *the elders of the land* [9] called him on a solemn occasion, some 120 years afterwards) contained more than teaching. It was cast into the

[1] 2 Chron. xvii. 7. [2] Ib. xiii. 2. [3] Ib. xviii. 8, Keth.
[4] מִיכָיְהוּ Judges xvii. 1, 4; מִיכָה 5, 8, 9, 10.
[5] מִיכָיְהוּ 1 Kings xxii. 8; 2 Chron. xviii. 7; מִיכָה 2 Chron. xviii. 14. [6] 2 Kings xxii. 12. [7] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 20.
[8] Num. xiii. 16. [9] Jer. xxvi. 17, 18.

form of a challenge. *Who is like the Lord?* The form of words had been impressed on Israel by the song of Moses after the deliverance at the Red Sea.[1] In the days of Elijah and that first Micaiah, the strife between God and man, the true Prophet and the false, had been ended at the battle of Ramoth-Gilead; it ceased for a time, in the reigns of Jehu and his successors, because, in consequence of his partial obedience, God, by Elisha and Jonah, promised them good: it was again resumed, as the promise to Jehu was expiring, and God's prophets had anew to proclaim a message of woe. *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?* [2] and, *I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil,*[3] Ahab's words as to Elijah and Micaiah, were the types of the subsequent contradiction of the false prophets to Hosea and Amos, which closed only with the destruction of Samaria. Now, in the time of the later Micaiah, were the first dawnings of the same strife in Judah, which hastened and brought about the destruction of Jerusalem under Zedekiah, which reappeared after the Captivity,[4] and was the immediate cause of the second destruction under the Romans. Micah, as he dwells on the meaning of names generally, so, doubtless, it is in allusion to

[1] Ex. xv. 11.
[2] 1 Kings xxi. 20.
[3] Ib. xxii. 8, 18.
[4] Neh. vi. 14.

his own that, at the close of his prophecy, he ushers in his announcement of God's incomparable mercy with the words, *Who is a God like unto Thee?*[1] Before him, whatever disobedience there was to God's law in Judah, there was no systematic, organised, opposition to His prophets. There is no token of it in Joel. From the times of Micah it is never missing. We find it in each prophet (however brief the remains of some are) who prophesied directly to Judah, not in Isaiah only, but in Habakkuk[2] and Zephaniah.[3] It deepened, as it hastened towards its decision. The nearer God's judgments were at hand, the more obstinately the false prophets denied that they would come. The system of false prophecy, which rose to its height in the time of Jeremiah, which met and thwarted him at every step,[4] and deceived those who wished to be deceived, was dawning in the time of Micah. False prophecy arose in Judah from the self-same cause whence it had arisen in Israel, because Judah's deepening corruption drew down the prophecies of God's displeasure, which it was popular to disbelieve. False prophecy was a gainful occupation. The false prophets had men's wishes on their side.

[1] vii. 18. [2] i. 5; ii. 1. [3] i. 12.

[4] See Jer. v. 13, 31; vi. 13–17; viii. 10–12; xiv. 13–16; xx. 1–6; xxiii. 9–end; xxvi. 7, 8, 11; xxvii. 14–18; xxviii. xxix. 8, 9, 21–32.

They had the people with them. *My people love to have it so*,[1] said God. They forbade Micah to prophesy ;[2] prophesied peace,[3] when God foretold evil ; prophesied for gain,[4] and proclaimed war in the Name of God [5] against those who fed them not.

At such a time was Micah called. His name, which he himself explains, was no chance name. To the Hebrews, to whom names were so much more significant, parts of the living language, it recalled the name of his great predecessor, his standing alone against all the prophets of Ahab, his prophecy, his suffering, his evidenced truth. The truth of prophecy was set upon the issue of the battle before Ramoth-Gilead. In the presence of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, as well as of Ahab, the 400 prophets of Ashtaroth had promised to Ahab the prize he longed for. One solitary, discriminating voice was heard amid that clamorous multitude, forewarning Ahab that he would perish, his people would be scattered. On the one side was that loud triumphant chorus of *all the prophets, Go up to Ramoth-Gilead, and prosper ; for the Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand*.[6] On the other, one solemn voice, exhibiting before them that sad spectacle which the morrow's sun should witness, *I saw all Israel scattered*

[1] Jer. v. 31. [2] ii. 6. [3] iii. 5. [4] iii. 11.
[5] iii. 5, see note. [6] 1 Kings xxii. 12.

upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd, and the Lord said, these have no master, let them return every man to his house in peace.[1] Micaiah was smitten, imprisoned, and, apparently, ended his ministry, appealing from that small audience of the armies of Israel and Judah to the whole world, which has ever since looked back on that strife with interest and awe; *Hear ye peoples, each one of them.*[2] God, who guided the archer shooting *at a venture*,[3] fulfilled the words which He had put into the Prophet's mouth. God's word had found Ahab, although *disguised;* Jehoshaphat, the imperilled,[4] returned home to relate the issue. The conflict between God's truth and idol falsehood was doubtless long remembered in Judah. And now, when the strife had penetrated into Judah, to be ended some 170[5] years afterwards in the destruction of Jerusalem, another Micaiah arose, his name the old watchword, *Who is like the Lord?* He prefixed to his prophecy that same summons[6] to the whole world to behold the issue of the conflict, which God had once accredited and, in that issue, had given an earnest of the victory of His truth, there thenceforth and for ever.

The Prophet was born a villager, in Moresheth

[1] 1 Kings xxii. 17. [2] Ib. xxii. 28. [3] Ib. xxii. 34.
[4] Ib. xxii. 30–33. [5] From the beginning of Jotham's reign.
[6] Hengst. Christ. i. 475.

Gath, "a village," [1] S. Jerome says ("a little village," [2] in S. Jerome's own days), "East of Eleutheropolis," where what was "formerly his grave," [3] was "now a Church." Since it was his birthplace and his burial-place, it was probably his home also. In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, *the elders of the land* [4] speak of him with this same title, *the Morasthite*. He lingers, in his prophecy, among the towns of the maritime plain (the Shephēlah) where his birthplace lay. Among the ten places in that neighbourhood,[5] which he selects for warning and for example of the universal captivity, is his native village, "the home he loved." But the chief scene of his ministry was Jerusalem. He names it in the beginning of his prophecy as the place where the idolatries, and, with the idolatries, all the other sins of Judah were concentrated. The two capitals, Samaria and Jerusalem, were the chief objects of the word of God to him, because the corruption of each kingdom streamed forth from them. The sins which he rebukes are chiefly those of the capital. Extreme oppression,[6] violence among the rich,[7] bribing among judges, priests, prophets; [8] building up the capital even by cost of life, or actual

[1] Onom. [2] Præf. to Micah.
[3] Ep. 86, ad Eustoch. Epitaph. Paulæ, § 14, i. 698.
[4] Jer. xxvi. 17, 18. [5] i. 11–15. [6] iii. 2, 3; ii. 2.
[7] vi. 12. [8] iii. 11, judges and priests, vii. 3.

bloodshed ;[1] spoliation ;[2] expulsion of the powerless, women and children from their homes ;[3] covetousness ;[4] cheating in dealings ;[5] pride.[6] These, of course, may be manifoldly repeated in lesser places of resort and of judgment. But it is *Zion and Jerusalem* which are so *built up with blood ;*[1] *Zion and Jerusalem*, which are, on that ground, to be *plowed as a field* ;[7] *it is the city*, to which *the Lord's voice crieth ;*[8] whose *rich men are full of violence ;*[9] it is the *daughter of Zion*,[10] which is to *go forth out of the city and go to Babylon*. Especially, they are the heads and princes of the people,[11] whom he upbraids for perversion of justice and for oppression. Even the good kings of Judah seem to have been powerless to restrain the general corruption.

Micah, according to the title which he prefixed to his prophecy, was called to the prophetic office somewhat later than Isaiah. His ministry began later, and ended earlier. For Uzziah, in whose reign Isaiah began to prophesy, was dead before Micah was called to his office ; and Micah probably was called away early in the reign of Hezekiah, whereas some of the chief public acts of Isaiah's ministry fell in the seventeenth and eighteenth years of the

[1] iii. 10, bloodshed also, vii. 2. [2] ii. 8. [3] ii. 9.
[4] ii. 2. [5] vi. 10, 11. [6] ii. 3. [7] iii. 12.
[8] vi. 9. [9] iii. 11, judges and priests vii. 3. [10] iv. 10.
[11] iii. 1, 9, 11 ; vi. 12 ; vii. 3.

reign of Hezekiah. Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, had doubtless been withdrawn to their rest. Hosea alone, in "grey-haired might," was still protesting in vain against the deepening corruptions of Israel.

The contents of Micah's prophecy and his relation to Isaiah agree with the inscription. His prophecy has indications of the times of Jotham, perhaps also of those of Ahaz; one signal prophecy, we know historically, was uttered in the reign of Hezekiah.

It is now owned, well-nigh on all hands, that the great prophecy, three verses of which Isaiah prefixed to his second chapter, was originally delivered by Micah. But it appears from the context in Isaiah that he delivered the prophecy in that second chapter, in the reign of Jotham. Other language of Micah also belongs to that same reign. No one now thinks that Micah adopted that great prophecy from Isaiah. The prophecy, as it stands in Micah, is in close connection with what precedes it. He had said, *the mountain of the house shall be as the high places of the forest;*[1] he subjoins instantly God's reversal of that sentence, *in the latter days. And in the last days it shall be that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established on the top of the mountains, and peoples shall flow unto it.*[2] He had said, *Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem*

[1] iii. 12. [2] iv. 1.

shall become heaps; he adds forthwith, in reversal of this, *the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*[1] The two sentences are joined as closely as they can be; *Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house shall become high places of a forest; and it shall be, in the last days, the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be* (abidingly[2]) *established on the top of the mountains.* Every reader would understand that the elevation intended was spiritual, not physical. They could not fail to understand the metaphor; or imagine that the Mount Zion, on part of which (Mount Moriah) the *house of the Lord* stood, should be physically placed on other hills. But the contrast is marked. The promise is the sequel of the woe; the abiding condition is the reversal of the sentence of its desolation. Even the words allude, the one to the other.[3]

In Isaiah there is no such connection. After the first chapter and its summary of rebuke, warning, threatening, and final weal or woe resting on each class, Isaiah, in his second chapter, begins his prophecy anew with a fresh title: *The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem;*[4] and to this he prefixes three verses

[1] iv. 2.

[2] It is not יִכּוֹנֵן, but יהיה־נכון.

[3] The הר בית יהוה iv. 1, to the הר הבית iii. 12, the יהיה to the תהיה. Hengst.

[4] ii. 1.

from Micah's prophecy. He separates it in a marked way from the preceding summary, and yet connects it with some other prophecy by the word *And*.[1] He himself marks that it is not in its original place here. So then, in the prophet Micah, the close connection with the foregoing marks that it *is* in its original place; Isaiah marked purposely that in his prophecy it is not.

But Isaiah's prophecy belongs to a time of prosperity; such as Judah had not, after the reign of Jotham. It was a time of great warlike strength, diffused through the whole land. The land was full,[2] without end, of gold, silver, chariots, horses, of lofty looks and haughtiness. The images which follow[3] are shadows of the day of judgment, and extend beyond Judah; but the sins rebuked are the sins of strength and might, self-confidence, oppression, manifold female luxury and bravery.[4] Isaiah prophesies that God would take away their strength.[5] Then they still had it. Judah trusted not at that time in God nor in foreign alliances, but in self. Yet, from the time of Ahaz, trust in foreign help infected them to the end. Even Hezekiah, when he received the messengers of Merodach-baladan,[6] fell into the snare; and Josiah probably lost his life,

[1] Isa. ii. 2. [2] Ib. ii. 7, 11. [3] Ib. ii. 12–21.
[4] Ib. iii. 16, 23. [5] Ib. iii. 1–3. [6] Ib. xxxix.

as a vassal of Assyria.[1] This union of inherent strength and unconcernedness about foreign aid is an adequate test of days anterior to Ahaz.

But since Isaiah prefixed to a prophecy in the days of Jotham this great prophecy of Micah, then Micah's prophecy must have been already current. To those same days of strength it belongs, that Micah could prophesy as a gift, the cutting off[2] of *horses and chariots*, the destruction *of cities* and *strong towers*, all, in which Judah trusted instead of God. The prophecy is a counterpart of Isaiah's. Isaiah prophesied a day of judgment, in which all these things should be removed; Micah foretold that their removal should be a mercy to those who trust in Christ.

On the other hand, the utter dislocation of society, the bursting of all the most sacred bands which bind man to man together, described in his last chapter,[3] perhaps belong most to the miserable decay in the reign of Ahaz. The idolatry spoken of also belongs probably to the time of Ahaz. In Jotham's time, *the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places;*[4] yet, under a king so highly praised,[5] these are not likely to have been in Jerusalem. But Micah, in the very head of his prophecy, speaks of Jerusalem[6]

[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 29; 2 Chron. xxxv. 20–22.
[2] Micah v. 10, 11, 14.
[3] vii. 5, 6.
[4] 2 Kings xv. 35.
[5] Ib. xv. 34; 2 Chron. xvii. 2, 6.
[6] i. 5.

as the centre of the idolatries of Judah. The allusion also to child-sacrifices belongs to the time of Ahaz, who sacrificed sons of his own,[1] and whose sacrifice others probably imitated. The mention of the special idolatry of the time, *the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab*,[2] belong to the same reign, it being recorded of Ahaz especially, *he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and made also molten images for Baalim*;[3] the special sin of the house of Ahab. That character too which he describes, that, amid all that idolatry, practical irreligion, and wickedness, they *leant upon the Lord, and said, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us*;[4] was just the character of Ahaz. Not until the end of his reign was he so embittered by God's chastisements that he closed his temple.[5] Up to that time, even after he had copied the brazen altar at Damascus, he still kept up a divided allegiance to God. Urijah, the High Priest, at the king's command, offered the sacrifices for the king and the people, while Ahaz used *the brazen altar, to enquire by*.[6] This was just the half-service which God by Micah rejects. It is the old history of man's half-service, faith without

[1] 2 Kings xvi. 3; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3.
[2] vi. 16.
[3] 2 Chron. xxviii. 2.
[4] iii. 11; vi. 6.
[5] 2 Chron. xxviii. 22–24.
[6] 2 Kings xvi. 15.

love, which provides that what it believes but loves not should be done for it, and itself enacts what it prefers. Urijah was to offer the lawful sacrifices for the king and the people; Ahaz was to obtain knowledge of the future, such as he wished in his own way, a lying future by lying acts.

Micah renewed under Hezekiah the prophecy of the utter destruction of Jerusalem, which he had pronounced under Jotham. The Prophets did not heed repeating themselves. Eloquent as they were, they are the more eloquent because eloquence was not their object. Even our Lord, with Divine wisdom, and the more, probably, because He had Divine wisdom, repeated in His teaching the same words. Those words sank the deeper, because often repeated. So Micah repeated doubtless oftentimes those words which he first uttered in the days of Jotham: *Zion shall be plowed like a field and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.* Often, during those perhaps thirty years, he repeated them in vain. At the last they wrought a great repentance, and delayed, it may be for 136 years, the destruction which he was constrained to foretell. Early in the days of Jehoiakim, about 120 years afterwards, in the public assembly when Jeremiah was on trial for his life, *the elders of the land* said

explicitly, that the great conversion at the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah, nay, of that king himself, was wrought by the teaching of Micah. *Then rose up*, says Jeremiah, *certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying, Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Zion shall be ploughed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house, as the high places of the forest. Did Hezekiah king of Judah, and all Judah, put him at all to death? Did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented Him of the evil which He had pronounced against them?* [1]

It may have been that single prophecy which Micah so delivered; some have thought that it was his whole book. Jeremiah, at God's command, at one time uttered single prophecies; at another, the summary of all his prophecies. This only is certain, that the prophecy, whether these words alone or the book containing them, was delivered to all Judah, and that God moved the people through them to repentance.

The words, as they occur in Jeremiah, are the same, and in the same order as they stand in Micah. Only in Jeremiah the common plural termination is

[1] Jer. xxvi. 17, 19.

substituted for the rarer and poetic form used by Micah.[1] The *elders*, then, who quoted them, probably knew them, not from tradition, but from the written book of the Prophet. But those elders speak of Micah as exercising his prophetic office in the days of Hezekiah. They do not say *he prophesied*, which might have been a single act; but *he was prophesying*, *hayah nibbah*, a form of speaking which is only used of an abiding, habitual, action. They say also, "he was habitually prophesying, and he said," *i.e.* as we should say, "in the course of his prophesying in the days of Hezekiah, he said." Still it was to *all the people of Judah* that he said it. The elders say so, and lay stress upon it by repeating it. *Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death?* It must have been then on some of the great festivals, when *all Judah* was gathered together, that Micah so spake to them.

Probably, shortly afterwards, in those first years of Hezekiah, Micah's office on earth closed. For, at the outset and in the summary of his prophecy, not incidentally, he speaks of the destruction of Samaria, which took place in the fourth year of Hezekiah, as still to come; and, however practical or partial idolatry continued, such idolatry as he throughout describes, did not exist after the reformation by

[1] עיים for עיין.

Hezekiah. This conversion, then, of the king and of some considerable part of Judah was probably the closing harvest of his life, after a long seed-time of tears. So God allowed His servant to *depart in peace*. The reformation itself, at least in its fulness, took place after the kingdom of Samaria had come to an end, since Hezekiah's messengers could, unhindered, invite all Israel to join in his great Passover. Probably, then, Micah lived to see the first dawnings only of the first reformation which God wrought by His words.

At the commencement, then, of Hezekiah's reign he collected the substance of what God had taught by him, re-casting it, so to speak, and retaining of his spoken prophecy so much as God willed to remain for us. As it stands, it belongs to that early time of Hezekiah's reign, in which the sins of Ahaz still lived on. Corruption of manners had been hereditary. In Jotham's reign, too, it is said expressly, in contrast with himself, *the people were still doing corruptly*.[1] Idolatry had, under Ahaz, received a fanatic impulse from the king, who, at last, set himself to close the worship of God.[2] The strength of Jotham's reign was gone; the longing for its restoration led to the wrong and destructive policy, against which Isaiah had to contend. Of this Micah

[1] 2 Chr. xxvii. 2. [2] Ib. xxviii. 22–25; xxix. 7.

says, such should not be the strength of the future kingdom of God. Idolatry and oppression lived on; against these, the inheritance of those former reigns, the sole residuum of Jotham's might or Ahaz's policy, the breach of the law of love of God and man, Micah concentrated his written prophecy.

This book also has remarkable symmetry. Each of its three divisions is a whole, beginning with upbraiding for sin, threatening God's judgments, and ending with promises of future mercy in Christ. The two later divisions begin again with that same characteristic, *Hear ye*,[1] with which Micah had opened the whole. The three divisions are also connected, as well by lesser references of the later to the former, as also by the advance of the prophecy. Judah could not be trusted now with any simple declaration of God's future mercy. They supposed themselves, impenitent as they were and with no purpose of repentance, to be the objects of God's care, and secure from evil. Unmixed promise of good would but foment this irreligious apathy. Hence on the promises at the end of the first portion, *and their king shall pass before them and the Lord at the head of them*,[2] he turns abruptly, *And I said, Hear, I pray you, Is it not for you to know judgment?* [3] The promise had been to *Jacob* and

[1] iii.–v. and vi., vii. [2] ii. 13. [3] iii. 1.

the remnant of Israel.[1] He renews his summons to the *heads of Jacob* and the *princes of the house of Israel.*[2] In like way, the last section, opening with that wonderful pleading of God with His people, follows upon that unbroken declaration of God's mercies, which itself issues out of the promised Birth at Bethlehem.

There is also a sort of progress in the promise of the three parts.[3] In the first, it is of deliverance generally, in language taken from that first deliverance from Egypt. The second is objective, the Birth of the Redeemer, the conversion of the Gentiles, the restoration of the Jews, the establishment and nature of His kingdom. The third is mainly subjective, man's repentance, waiting upon God, and God's forgiveness of his sins.

Throughout, the metropolis is chiefly addressed, as the main seat of present evil [4] and as the centre of the future blessings; where the reign of the long-promised Ruler should be; [5] whence the revelation of God should go forth to the heathen; [6] whither the scattered and dispersed people should be gathered.[7]

Throughout the prophecy also, Micah upbraids the same class of sins, wrong dealing of man to man, oppression of the poor by the rich.[4] Throughout,

[1] ii. 12. [2] iii. 1. [3] Hengst. Christ. i. 477, 478.
[4] See above, p. 7. [5] iv. 2, 7, 8.
[6] iv. 1, 2. [7] iv. 6, 7; vii. 11, 12.

their future captivity and dispersion are either predicted,[1] or assumed as the basis of the prediction of good.[2] Throughout, we see the contemporary of the prophet Isaiah. Besides that great prediction, which Isaiah inserted verbally from Micah, we see them, as it were, side by side, in that city of God's visitation and of His mercy, prophesying the same respite, the same place of captivity and deliverance from it, the same ulterior mercies in Christ. "The more to establish the faith, God willed that Isaiah and Micah should speak together, as with one mouth, and use such agreement as might the more convict all rebels." [3] Assyria was then the monarchy of the world; yet both prophets promise deliverance from it;[4] both foretell the captivity in the then subordinate Babylon;[5] both, the deliverance from it.[6] Both speak in the like way of the gathering together of God's people from lands, to some of which they were not yet dispersed.[7] Isaiah prophesied the Virgin-Birth of Immanuel;[8] Micah, the Birth at Bethlehem of Him *Whose goings forth* have been *of*

[1] i. 11, 14–16; ii. 4, 5, 10 (utter abiding destruction of Jerusalem); iii. 12; iv. 10; v. 3.

[2] ii. 12, 13; iv. 6, 7, 10; vii. 11, 12, 15.

[3] Carpz. Introd. p. 365, in Häv. ii. 364.

[4] Isa. x. 24–34; xiv. 25; xxx. 31; xxxi. 8, 9; xxxvii. 6, 7, 21–35; Mic. v. 5, 6.

[5] Isa. xxxix. 6; Mic. iv. 10. [6] Isa. xlviii. 20; Mic. iv. 10.

[7] Isa. xi. 11 sqq.; Mic. vii. 12. [8] vii. 14.

old, from everlasting.[1] Both speak in the like way of the reverence for the Gentiles thereafter for her,[2] by reason of the presence of her God. Even, in outward manner, Micah, representing himself, as one who *went mourning* and *wailing, stripped and naked*,[3] is a sort of forerunner of the symbolic acts of Isaiah.[4] Micah had this also common with Isaiah, that he has a predominance of comfort. He is brief in upbraiding,[5] indignant in casting back the pleas of the false prophets,[6] concise in his threatenings of woe,[7] save where he lingers mournfully over the desolation,[8] large and flowing in his descriptions of mercy to come.[9] He sees and pronounces the coming punishment, as absolutely certain; he does not call to repentance to avert it; he knows that ultimately it will not be averted; he sees it irrespectively of time, and says that it will be. Time is an accident to the link of cause and effect. Sin consummated would be the cause; punishment, the effect. He spoke to those who knew that God pardoned on repentance, who had lately had before them that marvellous instance in Nineveh. He dashes to the ground their false security, by reason of their descent from Jacob,[10] of God's Presence

[1] v. 2 Eng. (1 Heb.). [2] Isa. xlix. 23; Mic. vii. 17; Häv. ib.
[3] i. 8, see note. [4] Isa. xx. 2, 3. [5] i. 5; ii. 1, 2, 9–11.
[6] ii. 7, 11; iii. 5–7. [7] ii. 3, 10; iii. 4, 12; vi. 13–16; vii. 4, 13.
[8] i. 10–16; ii. 4, 5. [9] iv., v., vii. 7–20. [10] ii. 7.

among them in the Temple ;[1] the multitude of their offerings amid the multitude of their sins.[2] He rejects, in God's name, their false, outward, impenitent penitence ; and thereby the more implies that He would accept a true repentance. They knew this, and were, for a time, scared into penitence. But in his book, as God willed it to remain, he is rather the prophet of God's dealings, than the direct preacher of repentance to individuals. Yet he is the more an evangelic preacher, in that he speaks of repentance, only as the gift of God. He does not ignore that man must accept the grace of God ; but, as Isaiah foretells of the days of the Gospel, *the idols He shall utterly abolish*,[3] so Micah first foretells that God would abolish all wherein man relied out of God, all wherein he prided himself,[4] every form of idolatry,[5] and subsequently describes the future evangelic repentance, submission to, and waiting upon God and His righteousness ;[6] and God's free plenary forgiveness.[7]

Micah's rapid unprepared transitions from each of his main themes to another, from upbraiding to threatening, from threatening to mercy, and then back again to upbraiding, is probably a part of that same vivid perception of the connection of sin,

[1] iii. 11. [2] vi. 6, 7. [3] Isa. ii. 18. [4] v. 9, 10. [5] v. 11–13. [6] vii. 8, 9. [7] vii. 18, 19.

chastisements, forgiveness, in the will and mind of God. He sees them and speaks of them in the natural sequence in which they were exhibited to him. He connects most commonly the sin with the punishment by the one word, *therefore*,[1] because it was an object with him to show that connection. The mercies to come he subjoins either suddenly without any conjunction,[2] or with the simple *and*. An English reader loses some of the force of this simplicity by the paraphrase, which, for the simple copula, substitutes the inference or contrast, *therefore*, *then*, *but*, *notwithstanding*,[3] which lie in the subjects themselves. An English reader might have been puzzled, at first sight, by the monotonous simplicity of the *and*, *and*, joining together the mention of events, which stand, either as the contrast or the consequence of those which precede them. The English version accordingly has consulted for the reader or hearer, by drawing out for him the contrast or consequence which lay beneath the surface. But this gain of clearness involved giving up so far the majestic simplicity of the Prophet, who at times speaks of things as they lay in the Divine Mind,

[1] Not i. 6, vi. 13, but i. 14, ii. 3, 5, iii. 6, 12.

[2] ii. 12; iv. 13.

[3] *Therefore*, i. 6; vi. 13; vii. 7; *then*, iii. 7; vii. 10; *but*, iii. 8; iv. 1, 4, 12; v. 2; vi. 16; *for*, iv. 5; *notwithstanding*, vii. 13.

and as, one by one, they would be unfolded to man, without explaining the relation in which they stood to one another. Micah knew that sufferings were, in God's purpose, travail-pains. And so, immediately after the denunciation of punishment, he adds so calmly, "*And* in the last days it shall be"; "*And* thou, Bethlehem Ephrata."[1] Or in the midst of his descriptions of mercies, he speaks of the intervening troubles, as the way to them. *Now why dost thou cry aloud? . . . pangs have taken thee, as a woman in travail . . . be in pain . . . thou shalt go even unto Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered:*[2] or, *Therefore will He give thee up until the time, &c.*[3] *i.e.* because He has these good things in store for thee, *He will give thee up, until the time* comes.

With this great simplicity Micah unites great vividness and energy. Thus in predicting punishment, he uses the form of command, bidding them, as it were, execute it on themselves; *Arise, depart:*[4] as, in the Great Day, our Lord shall say, *Depart, ye cursed.* And since God does in us or by us what He commands to be done, he uses the imperative to Zion, alike as to her victories over God's enemies,[5] or her state of anxious fear.[6]

[1] iv. 1; v. 2 (1 Heb.); add vii. 7. [2] iv. 9, 10.
[3] v. 3 (2 Heb.). [4] ii. 10; add i. 11, 13; iv. 10.
[5] iv. 13. [6] v. 1 (iv. 14 Heb.).

To that same vividness belong his rapid changes of person or gender; his sudden questions;[1] his unmarked dialogues. The changes of person and gender occur in all Hebrew poetry; all have their emphasis. He addresses the people or place as a whole (*fem.*), then all the individuals in her;[2] or turns away and speaks of it;[3] or, contrariwise, having spoken of the whole in the third person, he turns round and drives the warning home to individuals.[4] The variations in the last verse of ch. vi. are unexampled for rapidity even in Hebrew.

And yet the flow of his words is smooth and measured. Without departing from the conciseness of Hebrew poetry, his cadence, for the most part, is of the more prolonged sort, as far as any can be called prolonged, when all is so concise. In some eight verses, out of 104, he is markedly brief, where conciseness corresponds with his subject, as in an abrupt appeal as to their sins,[5] or an energetic announcement of judgment[6] or of mercy,[7] or in that remarkable prophecy of both,[8] how God would, in

[1] i. 5; ii. 7; iii. 1; iv. 9; vi. 3, 6, 10, 11; vii. 18.
[2] i. 11, twice.
[3] i. 2, twice; in i. 13 he returns to the 2nd pers.
[4] ii. 3. [5] iii. 10, five words; vi. 11, six words.
[6] v. 8, and vii. 13, seven words.
[7] vii. 11, seven words; vii. 15, five words.
[8] v. 13, Heb., five words; v. 10, six words; v. 11, seven words.

mercy, cut off all grounds of human trust. Else, whereas in Nahum and Habakkuk, not quite $\frac{1}{3}$, and in the eleven last chapters of Hosea much less than $\frac{1}{3}$, of the verses contain more than thirteen words,[1] in Micah above $\frac{3}{7}$ (as, in Joel, nearly $\frac{3}{7}$) exceed that number.[2] The verses are also distributed in that ever-varying cadence, whereby, in Hebrew poetry, portions of their short sentences being grouped together, the harmony of the whole is produced by the varied dispositions of these lesser groups of two, three, four, and but rarely five words; scarcely any two verses exactly corresponding, but all being united by the blending of similar cadences.[3] In Micah, as in all Hebrew poetry, the combination of three words is the most frequent, and this, sometimes by itself, sometimes in union with the number four, making the sacred number seven; or, with two, making a number which we find in the tabernacle, but which dwells more in the hearts of the disciples

[1] Out of the 157 verses in Hosea's eleven last chapters, 111 contain fewer than fourteen words each, forty-six only fourteen words or upwards; out of forty-six, of which the book of Nahum consists (excluding the title), fourteen only have more than thirteen words; out of fifty-five of Habakkuk, seventeen only have more than thirteen.

[2] In Micah, forty-eight out of 104; in Joel, thirty out of seventy-two; in Obadiah, ten out of twenty-one.

[3] There is less difference between a verse of fourteen words, distributed 43,43, and one of eleven, distributed 32,42, than in a verse whose ten words were distributed 32,32 or 323,2.

of the Crucified. The same exact rhythm seldom recurs, and that, naturally, chiefly in the shorter verses, the longer admitting or requiring more combinations. Wherever also there is more than one pause in the verse, a further and very considerable variety of rhythm may be produced, even when the several clauses of two verses contain the same number of words in the same order. The difference of cadence is far more influenced by the place where the verse is divided, than by the exact number of words contained in it. The rhetorical force of the distribution of the words into the several clauses, depends mainly upon the place of the Athnach or semicolon.[1] The same exact rhythm (in which both the same number of words occur in the verse, and the verse is divided in the same place) recurs only seven times in Micah, in verses capable of a variation. The other four cases of repetition occur in short verses which have one division only,[2] accord-

[1] See note 3, p. 26.

[2] The following summary of these lesser divisions, which are mostly marked by the Hebrew accents, may perhaps give some little idea of the rhythm. Only the degree of subdivision must often be a matter of opinion or taste or ear. Thus, of five words which grammatically belong together, one might think that the cadence separated them into three and two; another might take them all together. But this is a matter of detail only; the principle is unmistakable. Again, words which have been artificially joined together in Hebrew by the Makkeph, I have considered as

ing to the place where the main division of the verse falls.

two words, if each had a distinct idea. Thus את when the mere sign of the object, I have not counted; when it is the preposition, "with," I have counted it. In the following list, the verses are ranged according to the number of the words contained in each verse, beginning with the highest. The numbers on the right hand indicate the lesser divisions into which each verse may be distributed. The comma in each set of numbers marks the place of the Athnach or semicolon. The Roman numerals indicate how often any cadence is repeated.

Words	Number of words in each lesser division.
24	333422,43 432,3264
22	46,534 14333,44
21	221,423232 4433,34
20	23333,33 333,3134 3333,44 4333,322
19	344,44 34,2253 32,4424
18	43,3233 342,423 3232,44
17	444,32 3433,22 3,4343 2223,332
16	222,433 3433,3 33,4222 44,44
15	32,325 3333,3 432,33 43,233 43,323 (ii) 134,133 43,332 3223,32
14	33,53 (ii) 34,34 23122,22 43,43 432,32 333,23 33,323 43,52 332,33 13,334 43,34 22,3313 2222,33 2222,51
13	43,33 3,442 332,32 1322,5 222,322 432,4 43,33 322,42
12	32,322 422,22 143,22 224,4 23,34 53,22 24,24 43,23
11	32,33 42,32 (ii) 33,32 23,33 (ii) 24,32 33,23 (ii) 4322 22,43 32,42
10	5,5 33,4 32,32 (ii) 323,2 32,23 (ii) 22,33 2222,2 43,3
9	43,2 4,32 3,33 42,3 22,32 33,3
8	132,2 33,2
7	4,3 (ii) 3,4 (ii) 3,22
6	3,3 (ii) 22,2
5	3,2 (ii)

His description of the destruction of the cities or villages of Judah corresponds in vividness to Isaiah's

To facilitate comparison, I subjoin a like analysis of the other prophets mentioned.

Hosea, eleven last chapters.

Words	Number of words in each lesser division.
22	422253,4 3244,54
21	4433,34 5,242224
20	32,33324 3333,44
19	4343,32 3423,34
18	4,4334 332,2332 2232,423 44,3223
17	43,3322 3332,33 23,4323 3223,223 333,323 3223,43 3442,4
16	2323,24 32,3422 233,323 21214,24 3223,33 3232,33 33,253 42,433
15	344,4 2323,23 3332,4 (ii.) 223,242 333,33
14	43,43 44,33 5,432 44,42 43,232 324,32 422,42 33,2222 33,44 3224,3 33,53 4,442 32,333 14,333
13	33,43 (iii.) 34,42 43,33 (ii.) 4,333 4,54 34,33 323,32 223,33 22,234 33,34
12	4,44 432,21 33,33 (ii.) 222,222 32,34 42,42 222,33 223,32 43,122 43,23 43,32 32,43
11	24,32 323,3 32,33 233,12 33,23 42,23 132,14 32,42 32,33 33,32 4,43 23,222
10	43,3 (ii.) 33,4 (ii.) 3,34 32,32 (ii.) 44,2 24,4 222,22 43,3 33,22 322,3
9	5,13 25,2 3,33 (ii.) 33,3 (iii.) 232,2 2,322 32,22 (ii.) 32,4 22,23 22,32 (ii.) 4,32 13,32 2,34 5,4 24,3
8	32,3 (ii.) 23,3 (iv.) 2222 224 (ii.)
7	13,3 (iii.) 4,3 (iii.) 3,4 (ii.) 2,23 22,3 2,32 23,2 31,3 33,1 14,2
6	4,2 (ii.) 3,3 (iii.) 13,2 (ii.)
5	3,2 (vii.) 2111 113

Joel.

25	334,3534
24	322,144332

ideal march of Sennacherib. The flame of war spreads from place to place; but Micah relieves the

Words	Number of words in each lesser division.
23	3544,223
22	423,4423
21	5422,422 3335,43
20	16,42313 34,3433
19	224,443
18	22,4433 33,435
17	3332,42 245,33 353,33 1422,35
16	334,42 2242,6 44,44
15	22233,3 2432,22 22222,32 344,4 23,2323 333,33 34,35
14	53,33 334,4 36,23 1432,4 3332,3
13	34,33 3,55 33,34
12	44,4 34,23 2222,4 5,34 24,33 43,32 32,223
11	22,322 (ii.) 223,22 2222,3 (ii.) 32,33 3,224 32,42 222,5 4,331 44,3 223,22 2222,3
10	32,32 222,22 22,42 231,4
9	32,22 (iii.) 2,43 5.22
8	3,23 22,22 4,22
7	133 3,4 (ii.) 3,22 22,3
6	3,3 (iv.)

Obadiah.

21	4333,323
19	4323,43
18	3332,133 34,344 4252,32
17	4242,32
16	5434 32422,3
15	334,23
14	43,43
13	332,23 42,34 4232,2
12	35,22
11	32,33 42,32
10	43,3
9	3,33
7	4,3 32,2
5	32

sameness of the description of misery by every variety which language allows. He speaks of them

Nahum.

Words	Number of words in each lesser division.
21	32232,72
19	2333,35 3233,44
18	32,337
16	34,2322 23,42131
15	323,43 33,522 22222,32 14123,4
14	44,33 (ii.) 32221,13 3,2234 234,32
13	42,223 3332,2 323,32
12	33.33 32,34 322.32 (ii.) 414,3 42,222 222,222
11	43,4 32,222 22.313 42,32 23,24 322,22
10	42,13 12,223 3,223 32,32
9	32,22 (ii.) 23,22
8	23,3 (ii.) 24,2 22,22
7	22,21
6	13,2 31,2
5	3,2

Habakkuk.

24	44,4444
20	4334,33
19	333,1423
18	43,254 3332,43
17	45,35 422,2232 54,44 333,53
15	34,44 332,322 33,234 34,233 43,44 13143,3 3333,3 333,42
14	43,322 332,33 33,44
13	32,422 33,43 23,44
12	323,22 (ii.) 33,33 (ii.)
11	222,32 32,42 32,33 322,4 42,14
10	322,3 3,34 4,33
9	33,3 (ii.) 4,5 24,3 42,3 23,4
8	311,3 22,4 3,32
7	3,4 (ii.) 4,3 (ii.)
6	3,3 (iv.)

in his own person,[1] or to them; he describes the calamity in past [2] or in future,[3] or by use of the imperative.[4] The verbal allusions are crowded together in a way unexampled elsewhere. Moderns have spoken of them, as not after their taste, or have apologised for them. The mighty Prophet, who wrought a repentance greater than his great contemporary Isaiah, knew well what would impress the people to whom he spoke. The Hebrew names had definite meanings. We can well imagine how, as name after name passed from the Prophet's mouth, connected with some note of woe, all around awaited anxiously, to know upon what place the fire of the Prophet's word would next fall; and as at last it had fallen upon little and mighty round about Jerusalem, the names of the places would ring in their ears as heralds of the coming woe; they would be like so many monuments, inscribed beforehand with the titles of departed greatness, reminding Jerusalem itself of its portion of the prophecy, that *evil* should *come from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem.*[5]

Wonderful must have been his lightning-flash of indignation, as, when the false prophet or the people had forbidden God's word to be spoken, he burst

[1] i. 8, 10; see note. [2] i. 9, 10, 11, 12.
[3] i. 8. [4] i. 11, 13, 16. [5] i. 12.

upon them, *Thou, called house of Jacob, shortened is God's Spirit? Or these His doings?* [1] And then follow the plaintive descriptions of the wrongs done to the poor, the peaceful, the mothers of his people and their little ones.[2] And then again the instantaneous dismissal, *Arise and depart.*[3] But, therewith, wonderful also is his tenderness. Burning as are his denunciations against the oppressions of the rich [4] (and words less vehement will not pierce hearts of stone), there is an under-current of tenderness. His rebukes evince not indignation only against sin, but a tender sympathy with the sufferers. He is afflicted in the afflictions which he has to denounce.[5] He yearns for his people; [6] nay, until our Lord's Coming, there is scarcely an expression of such yearning longing: he hungers and thirsts for their good.[7]

God's individual care of His people, and of each soul in it, had, since David's time [8] and even since Jacob,[9] been likened to the care of the shepherd for each single sheep. The Psalms of Asaph [10] must have familiarised the people to the image, as relating to themselves as a whole, and David's deep Psalm

[1] ii. 7. [2] ii. 8, 9. [3] ii. 10.
[4] ii. 1, 2; iii. 1–3, 9–11; vi. 10–12; vii. 2, 3.
[5] i. 8, 9; ii. 1, 2; vii. 5, 6. [6] i. 8–10, 16; iv. 9, 10.
[7] vii. 1. [8] Ps. xxiii. [9] Gen. xlix. 24.
[10] Ps. lxxiv. 1; lxxviii. 52; lxxix. 13; lxxx. 1.

had united it with God's tender care of His own in, and over, death. Yet the predominance of this image in Micah is a part of the tenderness of the Prophet. He adopts it, as expressing, more than any other natural image, the helplessness of the creature, the tender individual care of the Creator. He forestalls our Lord's words, *I am the good Shepherd*, in his description of the Messiah, gathering *the remnant of Israel together, as the sheep of Bozrah ;*[1] His people are as a flock, *lame and despised*,[2] whom God would assemble ; His royal seat, *the tower of the flock ;*[3] the Ruler of Israel should *stand*, unresting, *and feed them ;*[4] those whom He should employ against the enemies of His people, are *shepherds*,[5] under Him, the true Shepherd. He sums up his prayer for his people to God, as their Shepherd ; *Feed Thy people with Thy rod, the flock of Thine heritage.*[6]

Directly, he was a Prophet for Judah only. At the beginning of his book, he condemns the idolatries of both capitals, as the central sin of the two kingdoms. The destruction of Samaria he pronounces at once, as future, absolutely certain, abiding.[7] There he leaves her, declares her *wound incurable*, and passes forthwith to Judah, to whom, he says,

[1] ii. 12. [2] iv. 6. [3] iv. 8. [4] v. 4 Eng. (3 Heb.).
[5] v. 5 (4 Heb.). [6] vii. 14. [7] i. 6, 7.

that wound should pass, whom that same enemy should reach.[1] Thereafter, he mentions incidentally the infection of Israel's sin spreading to Judah.[2] Else, after that first sentence on Samaria, the names of Jacob (which he had given to the ten tribes[3]) and Israel are appropriated to the kingdom of Judah:[4] Judah is mentioned no more, only her capital;[5] even her kings are called *the kings of Israel*.[6] The ten tribes are only included in the general restoration of the whole.[7] The future remnant of the two tribes, to be restored after the captivity of Babylon, are called by themselves *the remnant of Jacob*;[8] the Messiah to be born at Bethlehem is foretold as *the ruler in Israel*;[9] the ten tribes are called *the remnant of His brethren*, who were to *return to the children of Israel*,[10] i.e. Judah.

This the more illustrates the genuineness of the inscription. A later hand would have been unlikely to have mentioned either Samaria or those earlier kings of Judah. Each part of the title corresponds to something in the prophecy; the name *Micah* is alluded to at its close; his birth-

[1] i. 9. [2] i. 13. [3] i. 5.
[4] *Jacob*, ii. 7; iii. 1, 8, 9; *Israel*, i. 14, 15; iii. 1, 8, 9; v. 1, 3; vi. 2. [5] See above, p. 7. [6] i. 14.
[7] *Jacob, all of thee*, ii. 12; *the remnant of Israel*, ib.
[8] v. 7, 8 (8, 9 Heb.).
[9] v. 2 (1 Heb.). [10] v. 3 (2 Heb.).

place, *the Morasthite*, at its beginning; the indications of those earlier reigns lie there, although not on its surface.[1] The mention of the two capitals, followed by the immediate sentence on Samaria, and then by the fuller expansion of the sins and punishment of Jerusalem, culminating in its sentence,[2] in Micah, corresponds to the brief mention of the punishment of Judah in Amos the Prophet of Israel, and then the fuller expansion of the sins and punishments of Israel. Further, the capitals, as the fountains of idolatry, are the primary object of God's displeasure. They are both specially denounced in the course of the prophecy; their special overthrow is foretold.[3] The title corresponds with the contents of the prophecy, yet the objections of modern critics show that the correspondence does lie on the surface.

The taunt of the false priest Amaziah to Amos may in itself suggest that prophets at Jerusalem did prophesy against Samaria. Amaziah, anyhow, thought it natural that they should. Both Isaiah and Micah, while exercising their office at Jerusalem, had regard also to Samaria. Divided as Israel and Judah were, Israel was not yet cut off. Israel and Judah were still, together, the one people

[1] See above, pp. 12, 13. [2] iii. 12.
[3] i. 6, 9, 12; iii. 10–12; iv. 10.

of God. The prophets in each had a care for the other.

Micah joins himself on to the men of God before him, as Isaiah at the time, and Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Ezekiel, subsequently, employed words or thoughts of Micah.[1] Micah alludes to the history, the laws, the promises, the threatenings of the Pentateuch; and that in such wise, that it is plain that he had, not traditional laws or traditional history, but the Pentateuch itself before him.[2] Nor were those books before himself only. His book implies not an acquaintance only, but a familiar acquaintance with it, on the part of the people. The title, *the land of Nimrod*,[3] *the house of bondage*,[4] for Egypt, the allusions to the miraculous deliverance from Egypt,[5] the history of Balaam, the whole summary of the mercies of God from the Exodus to Gilgal,[6] the faithfulness pledged to Abraham and Jacob,[7] would be unintelligible without the knowledge of the Pentateuch. Even single expressions

[1] See Caspari Micha, 449–455.

[2] See at length, in Caspari, pp. 420–427, and below on the places.

[3] v. 6 (5 Heb.) from Gen. x. 8–12.

[4] vi. 4; comp. Deut. vii. 8; xiii. 5; Exod. xiii. 3, 14; xx. 2. Else only in Josh. xxiv. 17 and Judges vi. 8, also from the Pent. Casp.

[5] See on ii. 13; vi. 4; vii. 15.

[6] See on vi. 4, 5. [7] See on vii. 20.

are taken from the Pentateuch.[1] Especially, the whole sixth chapter is grounded upon it. Thence is the appeal to inanimate nature to hear the controversy; thence the mercies alleged on God's part; the offerings on man's part to atone to God (except the one dreadful superstition of Ahaz) are from the law; the answer on God's part is almost verbally from the law; the sins upbraided are sins forbidden in the law; the penalties pronounced are also those of the law. There are two allusions also to the history of Joshua,[2] to David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan,[3] and, as before said, to the history of Micaiah son of Imlah in the book of Kings. Single expressions are also taken from the Psalms[4] and the Proverbs.[5] In the description of the peace of the kingdom of Christ,[6] he appears purposely to have reversed God's description of the animosity of the nations against God's people.[7] He has also two characteristic expressions of Amos. Perhaps, in the image of the darkness which should come on the false prophets,[8] he applied anew the image of Amos,

[1] As עלה ii. 13, העלה vi. 4, שלח לפני ib., שכני לבדד vii. 14, זחלי ארץ vii. 17, Casp.

[2] See on ii. 4; vi. 5. [3] i. 10.

[4] Casp. 428–30; see on ii. 1; iii. 2, 3; vii. 2, 7, 8, 10.

[5] Casp. 430–2; see on vi. 9, 11. [6] iv. 3; Joel iii. 10.

[7] כי עת רעה היא ii. 3; Amos v. 13; and הטיף ii. 6, 11; Amos vii. 16; Casp. 443.

[8] Micah iii. 6; Amos viii. 9.

adding the ideas of spiritual darkness and perplexity to that of calamity.

The light and shadows of the prophetic life fell deeply on the soul of Micah. The captivity of Judah too had been foretold before him. Moses had foretold the end from the beginning, had set before them the captivity and the dispersion, as a punishment which the sins of the people would certainly bring upon them. Hosea presupposed it; Amos foretold that Jerusalem, like the cities of its heathen enemies, should be burned with fire.[1] Micah had to declare its lasting desolation.[2] Even when God wrought repentance through him, he knew that it was but for a time; for he foresaw and foretold that the deliverance would be, not in Jerusalem, but at Babylon,[3] in captivity. His prophecy sank so deep, that, above a century afterwards, just when it was about to have its fulfilment, it was *the* prophecy which was remembered. But the sufferings of time disappeared in the light of eternal truth. Above seven centuries rolled by, and Micah reappears as the herald, not now of sorrow but of salvation. Wise men from afar, in the nobility of their simple belief, asked, *Where is He that is born King of the Jews?* A king, jealous for his temporal empire, gathered all those learned in Holy Scripture, and

[1] ii. 5. [2] iii. 12. [3] iv. 10.

echoed the question. The answer was given, unhesitatingly, as a well-known truth of God, in the words of Micah. *For thus it is written in the Prophet.* Glorious peerage of the two contemporary prophets of Judah. Ere Jesus was born, the Angel announced the birth of the Virgin's Son, *God with us*, in the words of Isaiah. When He was born, He was pointed out as the Object of worship to the first converts from the heathen, on the authority of God, through Micah.

MICAH

CHAPTER I

1 *Micah showeth the wrath of God against Jacob for idolatry.* 10 *He exhorteth to mourning.*

THE word of the LORD that came to [a] Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Heze-

[a] Jer. xxvi. 18.

CHAP. I. ver. 1. *The word of the Lord that came to Micah . . . which he saw.* No two of the prophets authenticate their prophecy in exactly the same way. They, one and all, have the same simple statement to make, that this which they say is *from* God, and *through* them. A later hand, had it added the titles, would have formed all upon one model. The title was an essential part of the prophetic book, as indicating to the people afterwards, that it was not written after the event. It was a witness, not to the prophet whose name it bears, but to God. The prophet bare witness to God, that what he delivered came from Him. The event bare witness to the prophet, that he said this truly, in that he knew what God alone could know,—futurity. Micah blends in one the facts, that he related in words given him by God, what he had seen spread before him in prophetic vision. His prophecy was, in one, *the word of the Lord which came to him*, and a sight *which* he *saw*.

kiah, kings of Judah, [a] which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

2 * Hear, all ye people; [b] hearken, O earth, and

[a] Amos i. 1.

* Heb. *Hear, ye people, all of them.*

[b] Deut. xxxii. 1; Isa. i. 2.

Micah omits all mention of his father. His great predecessor was known as Micaiah *son of Imlah.* Micah, a villager, would be known only by the name of his native village. So Nahum names himself *the Elkoshite;* Jonah is related to be a native *of Gath-hepher;* Elijah, the Tishbite, a sojourner in the despised Gilead;[1] Elisha, of Abelmeholah; Jeremiah, of Anathoth; forerunners of *Him,* and taught by *His* Spirit, Who willed to be born at Bethlehem, and since this, although *too little to be* counted *among the thousands of Judah,* was yet a royal city and was to be the birthplace of the Christ, was known only as *Jesus of Nazareth, the Nazarene.* No prophet speaks of himself, or is spoken of, as born at Jerusalem, *the holy city.* They speak of themselves with titles of lowliness, not of greatness.

Micah dates his prophetic office from kings of Judah only, as the only kings of the line appointed by God. Kings of Israel are mentioned in addition, only by prophets of Israel. He names Samaria first, because, its iniquity being most nearly full, its punishment was the nearest.

2. *Hear, all ye people,* lit. *hear, ye peoples, all of them.* Some 140 or 150 years had flowed by, since Micaiah, son of Imlah, had closed his prophecy in these words. And now they burst out anew. From age to age the word of God holds its course, ever receiving new fulfilments, never dying out, until the end shall come. The signal fulfilment of the prophecy, to which the former Micaiah had called

[1] 1 Kings xvii. 1.

* all that therein is; and let the Lord GOD [a] be

* Heb. *the fulness thereof.* [a] Ps. l. 7; Mal. iii. 5.

attention in these words, was an earnest of the fulfilment of this present message of God.

Hearken, O earth, and all that therein is. The *peoples* or *nations* are never Judah and Israel only: *the earth and the fulness thereof* is the well-known title of the whole earth [1] and all its inhabitants. Moses,[2] Asaph,[3] Isaiah,[4] call heaven and earth as witnesses against God's people. Jeremiah,[5] as Micah here, summons *the nations* and the *earth*. The contest between good and evil, sin and holiness, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, everywhere, but most chiefly where God's presence is nearest, is *a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men.*[6] The nations are witnesses of God against His own people, so that these should not say, that it was for want of faithfulness or justice or power,[7] but in His righteous judgment, that He cast off whom He had chosen. So shall the Day of Judgment *reveal His righteousness.*[8] *Hearken, O earth.* The lifeless earth [9] *trembles at the Presence of God*, and so reproaches the dulness of man. By it he summons man to listen with great reverence to the Voice of God.

[1] In the two passages quoted for the contrary, Jer. viii. 16; Ezek. xii. 19, the context shows that אֶרֶץ is and can only be *land*, not *earth*, Jer. *The snorting of his horses is heard from Dan, and they came and devoured the land and the fulness thereof;* where *the land* to which they *came* could plainly be Judea only. In Ezekiel it is not even *the land*, but *her land. Say unto the people of the land: Thus saith the Lord God of the land of Israel, . . . that her land may be desolate from all the fulness thereof.*

[2] Deut. xxxii. 1. [3] Ps. l. 7. [4] i. 2.
[5] vi. 19. [6] 1 Cor. iv. 9.
[7] Exod. xxxii. 12; Num. xiv. 16; Josh. vii. 8, 9.
[8] Rom. ii. 5. [9] Ps. cxiv. 7; xcvii. 5.

witness against you, the Lord from [a] his holy temple.

[a] Ps. xi. 4; Jonah ii. 7; Hab. ii. 20.

And let the Lord God be witness against you. Not in words, but in deeds ye shall know, that I speak not of myself, but God in me, when, what I declare, He shall by His Presence fulfil. But the nations are appealed to, not merely because the judgments of God on Israel should be made known *to* them by the prophets. He had not yet spoken of Israel or Judah, whereas he *had* spoken to the nations; *hear, ye peoples.* It seems then most likely that here too he is speaking to them. Every judgment is an earnest, a forerunner, a part, of the final judgment and an ensample of its principles. It is but "the last great link in the chain," which unites God's dealings in time with eternity. God's judgments on one imply a judgment on all. His judgments in time imply a judgment beyond time. Each sinner feels in his own heart a response to God's visible judgments on another. Each sinful nation may read its own doom in the sentence on each other nation. God judges each according to his own measure of light and grace, accepted or refused. The Heathen shall be judged by *the law written in their heart;*[1] the Jew, by the law of Moses and the light of the prophets; Christians, by the law of Christ. *The word*, Christ saith, *that I have spoken, the same shall judge him at the last Day.*[2] God Himself foretold, that the heathen should know the ground of His judgments against His people.[3] *All nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their*

[1] Rom. ii. 12–15. [2] S. John xii. 48.
[3] Deut. xxix. 24, 25.

3 For, behold, [a] the LORD cometh forth out of

[a] Isa. xxvi. 21.

fathers which He made with them, when He brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, &c. But in that the heathen knew why God so punished His people, they came so far to know the mind of God; and God, Who at no time *left Himself without witness*,[1] bore fresh *witness* to them, and, so far as they neglected it, *against* them. A Jew, wherever he is seen throughout the world, is a witness to the world of God's judgments against sin.

"Christ, *the faithful Witness*, shall *witness against* those who do ill, *for* those who do well." [2]

The Lord from His holy temple. Either that at Jerusalem, where God showed and revealed Himself, or heaven, of which it was the image. As David says, *The Lord* is *in His holy temple; the Lord's throne* is *in heaven;* [3] and contrasts His dwelling in heaven and His coming down upon earth. *He bowed the heavens also and came down;* [4] and Isaiah, in like words, *Behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.*[5]

3. *For, behold, the Lord cometh forth*, i.e. (as we now say) *is coming forth.* Each day of judgment, and the last also, are ever drawing nigh, noiselessly as the nightfall, but unceasingly. *Out of His Place.* "God is hidden from us, except when He showeth Himself by His Wisdom or Power or Justice or Grace, as Isaiah saith,[6] *Verily, Thou art a God Who hidest Thyself.*" [2] He seemeth to be absent, when He doth not visibly work either in the heart within, or in judgments without; to the ungodly and unbelieving He is absent, *far above out of their sight*,[7] when He does not avenge their scoffs, their sins, their irreverence. Again He

[1] Acts xiv. 17. [2] Dion. [3] Ps. xi. 4.
[4] Ps. xviii. 9. [5] xxvi. 21. [6] xlv. 15. [7] Ps. x. 5.

his [a] place, and will come down, and tread upon the [b] high places of the earth.

[a] Ps. cxv. 3.
[b] Deut. xxxii. 13 and xxxiii. 29; Amos iv. 13.

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seemeth to go forth, when His Power is felt. "Whence it is said, *Bow Thy heavens, O Lord, and come down;* [1] and the Lord saith of Sodom, *I will go down now and see, whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me.*[2] Or, *the Place* of the Infinite God is God Himself. For the Infinite sustaineth Itself, nor doth anything out of Itself contain It. God *dwelleth* also *in light unapproachable.*[3] When, then, Almighty God doth not manifest Himself, He abideth, as it were, in *His own Place.* When He manifests His Power or Wisdom or Justice by their effects, He is said to *go forth out of His Place,* i.e. out of His Hiddenness. Again, since the Nature of God is Goodness, it is proper and co-natural to Him to be propitious, have mercy, and spare. In this way, *the Place* of God is His mercy. When, then, He passeth from the sweetness of pity to the rigour of equity, and, on account of our sins, showeth Himself severe (which is, as it were, alien from Him) He *goeth forth out of His Place.*" [4] "For He Who is gentle and gracious, and Whose Nature it is to have mercy, is constrained, on your account, to take the seeming of hardness, which is not His." [5]

He comes invisibly now, in that it is He Who punisheth, through whatever power or will of man He useth; He shows forth His Holiness through the punishment of unholiness. But the words, which are image-language now, shall be most exactly fulfilled in the end, when, in the Person of our Lord, He shall *come* visibly to judge the

[1] Ps. cxliv. 5; Isa. lxiv. 1. [2] Gen. xviii. 21.
[3] 1 Tim. vi. 16. [4] Dion. [5] S. Jer.

4 And [a] the mountains shall be molten under him,

[a] Judges v. 5; Ps. xcvii. 5; Isa. lxiv. i. 2, 3; Amos ix. 5; Hab. iii. 6, 10.

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world. "In the Day of Judgment, Christ *shall come down*, according to that Nature which He took, *from His Place*, the highest heavens, and shall cast down the proud things of this world."[1]

And will come down; not by change of place, or in Himself, but as felt in the punishment of sin; *and tread upon the high places of the earth;* to bring down the pride of those[2] who "being lifted up in their own conceit and lofty, sinning through pride and proud through sin, were yet created out of earth. For [3] *why is earth and ashes proud?*"[4] What seems mightiest and most firm, is unto God less than is to man the dust under his feet. The high places were also the special scenes of an unceasing idolatry. "God treadeth *in* the good and humble, in that He dwelleth, walketh, feasteth in their hearts.[5] But He *treadeth upon* the proud and the evil, in that He casteth them down, despiseth, condemneth them."

4. *And the mountains shall be molten under Him.* It has been thought that this is imagery taken from volcanic eruptions;[6] but, although there is a very remarkable volcanic district just outside of Gilead, it is not thought to have been active at times so late as these; nor were the people to whom the words were said, familiar with it. Fire, the real agent at the end of the world, is, meanwhile, the symbol of God's anger, as being the most terrible of His instruments of destruction; whence God revealed Himself as *a consuming fire;*[7] and, at this time said by Isaiah:[8]

[1] S. Jer. Theoph.
[2] See Amos iv. 13; Job ix. 8.
[3] Ecclus. x. 9.
[4] Rup.
[5] 2 Cor. vi. 16; Rev. iii. 20.
[6] Henderson here.
[7] Deut. iv. 24.
[8] lxvi. 15.

and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire,

For behold, the Lord will come with fire . . . to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire.

And the valleys shall be cleft as wax before the fire. It seems natural that the mountains should be cleft; but the valleys,[1] so low already! This speaks of a yet deeper dissolution; of lower depths beyond our sight or knowledge, into the very heart of the earth. "This should they fear, who will to be so low; who, so far from lifting themselves to heavenly things, pour out their affections on things of earth, meditate on and love earthly things, and, forgetful of the heavenly, choose to fix their eyes on earth. These the wide gaping of the earth which they loved, shall swallow; to them the *cleft valleys* shall open an everlasting sepulchre, and, having received them, shall never part with them."[2]

Highest and lowest, first and last, shall perish before Him. The pride of the highest, kings and princes, priests and judges, shall sink and melt away *beneath* the weight and Majesty of His glory; the hardness of the lowest, which would not open itself to Him, shall be cleft in twain before Him.

As wax before the fire,[3] melting away before Him by Whom they were not softened, vanishing into nothingness. Metals melt, changing their form only; wax, so as to cease to be.[4]

As the waters poured down (as a stream or cataract, so

[1] Hence some MSS. mentioned in De Rossi's, 219, have (as a conjecture) הנבעות "the hills."

[2] Sanch. [3] See Ps. xcvii. 5.

[4] See S. Hil. in Ps. lvii. § 4. מסס is used, as to natural objects, only of such melting whereby the substance is wasted, as of manna (Exod. xvi. 21), wax (Ps. lxviii. 3, &c.), or the body through disease (1 Sam. xxv. 37), then, morally, chiefly of fear.

and as the waters *that are* poured down * a steep place.

* Heb. *a descent.*

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the word means[1]) *a steep place.* Down to the very edge, it is borne along, one strong, smooth, unbroken current; then, at once, it seems to gather its strength for one great effort. But to what end? To fall, with the greater force, headlong, scattered in spray, foam, and froth; dissipated, at times, into vapour, or reeling in giddy eddies, never to return. In Judæa, where the autumn rains set in with great vehemence,[2] the waters must have been often seen pouring in their little tumultuous brooklets down the mountain side,[3] hastening to disappear, and disappearing

[1] See Ges. Thes. sub v. from the Punic, Monum. Phœn., p. 418. "There are many waterfalls in Lebanon, one very near and to the N. of the Damascus road. I have also seen one in Anti-libanus on the river Barada, a little above Abîl. The stream, named Sheba, which springs from the perpetual snows of Mount Hermon, is extremely rapid and has a very steep fall to the Hasbeia, which it joins in Merj-el-Huleh. The Jordan is a continual cataract between el-Huleh and the Lake of Gennesareth;" (Rev. G. Williams, MS. letter) "a fall of 600 feet in about 10 miles. On the Western bank, high above the rocky bed of the torrent, the water was running rapidly down the steep incline towards the river, which could hardly be less than 150 feet below us" (Id. Col. Church Chron. 1860, Jan. p. 30). Porter describes the fall of the river Adonis (Five Years, i. 295). From the height at which the streams rise in the Lebanon chain, there must be many greater or lesser falls.

[2] Hence the Hebrew name גשם, "heavy rain," for which we have no one word, is used of the autumn and winter rain. Cant. ii. 11.

[3] I have seen this effect for above half-an-hour (15 miles) on the mountain country near the lakes in a thunderstorm.

5 For the transgression of Jacob *is* all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What *is* the

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the faster, the more vehemently they rolled along.[1] Both images exhibit the inward emptiness of sinners, man's utter helplessness before God. They need no outward impulse to their destruction. "Wax endureth not the nearness of the fire, and the waters are carried headlong. So all of the ungodly, when the Lord cometh, shall be dissolved and disappear."[2] At the end of the world they shall be gathered into bundles and cast away.

5. *For the transgression of Jacob is all this.* Not for any change of purpose in God; nor, again, as the effect of man's lust of conquest. None could have any power against God's people, unless it had been given him by God. Those mighty monarchies of old existed but as God's instruments, especially towards His own people. God said at this time of Assyria, *Asshur, rod of Mine anger, and the staff in his hand* is *Mine indignation;*[3] and, *Now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities* into *ruinous heaps.*[4] Each scourge of God chastised just those nations which God willed him to chasten; but the especial object for which each was raised up was his mission against that people in whom God most showed His mercies and His judgments. *I will send him against an ungodly nation and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge.*[5] *Jacob* and *Israel*, in this place, comprise alike the ten tribes and the two. They still bear the name of their father, who, wrestling with the Angel, became *a prince with God*, Whom they forgat. The name of Jacob then, as of Christian now,

[1] "The decrease of the waters (swollen by the rains in the mountains) is usually as rapid as their rise." Burckhardt, Syria, p. 161. [2] S. Jer. [3] Isa. x. 5.
[4] Jb. xxxvii. 26. [5] Jb. x. 6.

transgression of Jacob? *is it* not Samaria? and what *are* the high places of Judah? *are they* not Jerusalem?

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stamped as deserters those who did not the deeds of their father. *What* [rather *Who*[1]] *is the transgression of Jacob? Who* is its cause? In whom does it lie? *Is it not Samaria?* The metropolis must, in its own nature, be the source of good or evil to the land. It is the heart whose pulses beat throughout the whole system. As the seat of power, the residence of justice or injustice, the place of counsel, the concentration of wealth, which all the most influential of the land visit for their several occasions, its manners penetrate in a degree the utmost corners of the land. Corrupted, it becomes a focus of corruption. The blood passes through it, not to be purified, but to be diseased. Samaria, being founded on apostasy, owing its being to rebellion against God, the home of that policy which set up a rival system of worship to *His*, forbidden by Him, became a fountain of evil, whence the stream of ungodliness overflowed the land. It became the impersonation of the people's sins, "the heart and head of the body of sin."

And what [lit. *Who*[1]] are *the high places of Judah?* are they *not Jerusalem?* Jerusalem God had formed to be a centre of unity in holiness; *thither the tribes of the Lord* were to *go up to the testimony of Israel;* there was the unceasing worship of God, the morning and evening sacrifice; the Feasts, the memorials of past miraculous mercies, the foreshadowings of redemption. But there too Satan placed his throne. Ahaz brought thither that most hateful idolatry, the burning children to Moloch *in the*

[1] מי always relates to a personal object, and apparent exceptions may be reduced to this. So AE. Kim. Tanch. Poc.

6 Therefore I will make Samaria [a] as an heap of

[a] 2 Kings xix. 25; iii. 12.

valley of the son of Hinnom.[1] There, *he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem.*[2] Thence, he extended the idolatry to all Judah. *And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers.*[3] Hezekiah, in his reformation, with *all Israel, went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces and hewed down the statues of Asherah, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin,* as much as out of *Ephraim and Manasseh.*[4] Nay, by a perverse interchange, Ahaz took *the brazen altar,* consecrated to God, for his own divinations, and assigned to the worship of God the altar copied from the idol-altar at Damascus, whose fashion pleased his taste.[5] Since *God and mammon cannot* be *served* together, Jerusalem was become one great idol-temple, in which Judah brought its sin into the very face of God and of His worship. The *Holy City* had itself become sin, and the fountain of unholiness. The one temple of God was the single protest against the idolatries which encompassed and besieged it; the incense went up to God, morning and evening, from it; from every head of every street of the city,[6] and (since Ahaz had brought in the worship of Baalim,[7] and the rites of idolatry continued the same) from *the roofs* of all their *houses,*[8] went up *the incense to Baal;* a worship which, denying the Unity, denied the Being of God.

6. *Therefore* [lit. *And*] *I will make Samaria as a heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard.* "The order of the

[1] 2 Chron. xxviii. 3. [2] Ib. xxviii. 24. [3] Ib. xxviii. 25.
[4] Ib. xxxi. 1. [5] 2 Kings xvi. 10–16.
[6] Ezek. xvi. 31; 2 Chron. xxviii. 24.
[7] 2 Chron. xxviii. 2. [8] Jer. xxxii. 29.

the field, *and* as plantings of a vineyard: and I

sin was the order of the punishment."[1] Samaria's sins were the earliest, the most obstinate, the most unbroken, bound up with its being as a state. On it, then, God's judgments should first fall. It was *a crown of pride, resting on the head of the rich valleys*,[2] out of which it rose. Its soil is still rich.[3] "The whole is now cultivated in terraces,"[4] "to the summits."[5] Probably, since the sides of hills, open to the sun, were chosen for vineyards, it had been a vineyard, before Shemer sold it to Omri.[6] What it had been, that it was again to be. Its inhabitants cast forth, its houses and gorgeous palaces were to become heaps of stones, *gathered out*[7] to make way for cultivation, or to become the fences of the vegetation, which should succeed to man. There is scarce a sadder natural sight than the fragments of human habitation, tokens of man's labour or his luxury, amid the rich beauty of nature when man himself is gone. For they are tracks of sin and punishment, man's rebellion and God's judgment, man's unworthiness of the good natural gifts of God. A century or two ago, travellers "speak of the ground [the site of Samaria] as strewed with masses of ruins."[8] Now these too are gone. "The stones of the temples and palaces of Samaria have been carefully removed from the rich soil, thrown together in heaps, built up in the rude walls of terraces, and rolled down into the valley below."[3] "About midway of the ascent, the hill is surrounded by a narrow terrace of woodland like a belt. Higher up too are the

[1] S. Jer. [2] Isa. xxviii. 1.
[3] Porter, Handbook, p. 345. [4] Ib. p. 344.
[5] Rob. ii. 304, 307. [6] 1 Kings xvi. 24. [7] Isa. v. 2.
[8] "Cotovicus in the sixteenth, and Von Troilo in the seventeenth century." Rob. ii. 307, note 1.

will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will [a] discover the foundations thereof.

[a] Ezek. xiii. 14.

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marks of slighter terraces, once occupied perhaps by the streets of the ancient city." [1] Terrace-cultivation has succeeded to the terraced streets once thronged by the busy, luxurious, sinful population.

And I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, of which it was the crest, and which it now proudly surveyed. God Himself would cause it to be poured down (he uses the word which he had just used of the vehemence of the cataract [2]). "The whole face of this part of the hill suggests the idea that the buildings of the ancient city had been thrown down from the brow of the hill. Ascending to the top, we went round the whole summit, and found marks of the same process everywhere." [3]

And I will discover the foundations thereof. The desolation is entire; *not one stone left upon another.* Yet the very words of threatening contain hope. It was to be not a *heap* only, but *the plantings of a vineyard.* The *heaps* betoken ruin; the *vineyard,* fruitfulness cared for by God. Destroyed, as what it was, and turned upside down, as a vineyard by the share, it should become again what God made it and willed it to be. It should again become a *rich valley,* but in outward desolation. Its splendid palaces, its idol temples, its *houses of joy,* should be but heaps and ruins, which are cleared away out of a vineyard, as only choking it. It was built in rebellion and schism, loose and not held together, like a *heap* of stones, having no cement of love, rent and torn in itself, having been torn both from God and His worship. It could be remade only by

[1] Rob. ii. 304. [2] ver. 4.

[3] Narrative of Scottish Mission, pp. 293, 294, in Henderson.

7 And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the [a] hires thereof shall be burned

[a] Hosea ii. 5, 12.

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being wholly unmade. Then should they who believed be branches grafted in Him Who said, *I am the Vine, ye are the branches.*[1]

7. *And all the graven images thereof shall be broken in pieces.* Its idols in whom she trusts, so far from protecting her, shall themselves go into captivity, broken up for the gold and silver whereof they were made. The wars of the Assyrians being religious wars,[2] the idolatry of Assyria destroyed the idolatry and idols of Israel.

And all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire. All forsaking of God being spiritual fornication from Him Who made His creatures for Himself, the *hires* are all which man would gain by that desertion of his God, all employed in man's intercourse with his idols, whether as bribing his idols to give him what are the gifts of God, or as himself bribed by them. For there is no pure service, save that of the love of God. God alone can be loved purely, for Himself; offerings to Him alone are the creature's pure homage to the Creator, going out of itself, not looking back to itself, not seeking itself, but stretching forth to Him and seeking Him for Himself. Whatever man gives to or hopes from his idols, man himself is alike his object in both. The *hire* then is, alike what he gives to his idols, *the gold whereof he makes* his *Baal*,[3] the offerings which the heathen used to lay up in their temples, and what, as he thought, he himself received back. For he gave only earthly things, in order to receive back things of earth. He hired their service to him, and his earthly gains

[1] S. John xv. 5.

[2] See Introduction to Nahum.

[3] See Hosea ii. 8.

with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay

were his hire. It is a strong mockery in the mouth of God, that they had these things from their idols. He speaks to them after their thoughts. Yet it is true that, although God overrules all, man does receive from Satan,[1] *the god of this world*,[2] all which he gains amiss. It is the price for which he sells his soul and profanes himself. Yet herein were the heathen more religious than the Christian worldling. The heathen did offer an ignorant service to they knew not what. Our idolatry of mammon, as being less abstract, is more evident self-worship, a more visible ignoring and so a more open dethroning of God, a worship of a material prosperity, of which we seem ourselves to be the authors, and to which we habitually immolate the souls of men, so habitually that we have ceased to be conscious of it.

And all the idols thereof will I lay desolate, lit. *make a desolation*. They, now thronged by their worshippers, should be deserted; their place and temple, a waste. He thrice repeats *all; all her graven images, all her hires, all her idols; all* should be destroyed. He subjoins a threefold destruction which should overtake them; so that, while the Assyrian broke and carried off the more precious, or burned what could be burned, and, what could not be burned, nor was worth transporting, should be left desolate, all should come to an end. He sets the whole the more vividly before the mind, exhibiting to us so many separate pictures of the mode of destruction.

For from the hire of a harlot she gathered them, *and to the hire of a harlot they shall return.* "The wealth and manifold provision which (as she thought) were gained by fornication with her idols, shall go to another harlot,

[1] S. Matt. iv. 9. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 4.

desolate: for she gathered *it* of the hire of an harlot and they shall return to the hire of an harlot.

Nineveh; so that, as they went a whoring in their own land, they should go to another land of idols and fornication, the Assyrians."[1] They *turned their glory into shame, changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man;*[2] and so it should turn to them into shame. It sprung out of their shame, and should turn to it again. "Ill got, ill spent." Evil gain, cursed in its origin, has the curse of God upon it, and makes its gainer a curse, and ends accursedly. "Make not ill gains," says even a heathen,[3] "ill gains are equal to losses;" and another,[4] "Unlawful sweetness a most bitter end awaiteth."

Probably, the most literal sense is not to be excluded. The degrading idolatrous custom, related of Babylon and Cyprus,[5] still continued among the Babylonians at the date of the book of Baruch,[6] and to the Christian era.[7] S. Augustine speaks of it as having existed[8] among the Phœnicians, and Theodoret[9] says that it was still practised by some in Syria. The existence of the idolatrous custom is presupposed by the prohibition by Moses;[10] and in the time of Hosea self-desecration was an idolatrous rite in Israel.[11] In the day of judgment, when the foundation of those who build their house upon the sand shall be laid bare, the riches which they gained unlawfully shall be burnt up; all the idols which they set up instead of God, "the vain thoughts, and useless fancies, and hurtful

[1] S. Jer. [2] Rom. i. 23. [3] Hesiod, Ἔ.κ.Ἡ, 354, L.
[4] Pindar Isthm. vii. 67, 68, L. [5] Herod. i. 199.
[6] vi. 43. [7] Strabo, xvi. 1, 20.
[8] Dabant. de Civ. Dei, iii. 10. [9] On this place.
[10] Deut. xxiii. 18. [11] See on Hosea iv. 14.

8 Therefore [a] I will wail and howl, [b] I will go

[a] Isa. xxi. 3 and xxii. 4; Jer. iv. 19. [b] Isa. xx. 2, 3, 4.

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forms and images which they picture in their mind, defiling it, and hindering it from the steadfast contemplation of divine things, will be punished. They were the hire of the soul which went astray from God, and they who conceived them will, with them, become the prey again of that infernal host which is unceasingly turned from God."[1]

8. *Therefore I will* [*would*[2]] *wail* [properly *beat*,[3] i.e. on the breast] *and howl.* "Let me alone," he would say, "that I may vent my sorrow in all ways of expressing sorrow, beating on the breast and wailing, using all acts and sounds of grief." It is as we would say, "Let me mourn *on*," a mourning inexhaustible, because the woe too and the cause of grief was unceasing. The Prophet becomes in words, probably in acts too, an image of his people, doing as they should do hereafter. He mourns, because and as they would have to mourn, bearing chastisement, bereft of all outward comeliness, an example also of repentance, since what he did were the chief outward tokens of mourning.

I will [*would*] *go stripped* [*despoiled*[4]] *and naked.* He explains the acts, that they represented no mere voluntary mourning. Not only would he, representing them, go

[1] Dion.

[2] He thrice repeats the optative אספדה ואילילה אילכה.

[3] ספד

[4] *Barefoot* is expressed in Hebrew by יחף. Since then Micah does not use the received term for *barefoot*, and does use the word expressing "stripped," "despoiled," the E.V. is doubtless right, agreeing with the Latin against the LXX and Syr.

bared of all garments of beauty, as we say "half-naked," [1] but *despoiled* also, the proper term of those plundered and stripped by an enemy. He speaks of his doing, what we know that Isaiah did, by God's command, representing in act what his people should thereafter do. "Wouldest thou that I should weep, thou must thyself grieve the first." [2] Micah doubtless went about, not speaking only of grief, but grieving, in the habit of one mourning and bereft of all. He prolongs in these words the voice of wailing, choosing unwonted forms of words, to carry on the sound of grief.[3]

I will make a wailing like the dragons [*jackals* [4]] *and mourning as the owls* [*ostriches* [5]]. The cry of both, as heard at

[1] See also on Amos ii. 16. Seneca says: "Some things, though not [exactly] true, are comprised under the same word, for their likeness. So we call illiterate, one not altogether uninstructed, but who has not been advanced to higher knowledge. So he who has seen one ill-habited and in rags, says that he had seen one 'naked.'" De Benef. v. 13, Sanch.

[2] Hor. A. P. 102, 103.

[3] שׁילל and אילכה carry on the sound of אילילה. שׁילל, the textual reading, is doubtless right, although without example; אילכה has analogy with other words, but, common as the word is, stands alone in the word itself. Each bears out the other.

[4] The תן, which occurs only in the plural תנים, is distinct from the תנין plur. תנינים, although they touch on each other, in that תנין sing. is written תנים Ezek. xxix. 3, and the poetic plural of תן, תנין, occurs in the text, Lam. iv. 3. The Syr. (and Chaldee, properly) and Tanchum oftentimes render it "jackal." Pococke first, of moderns, brought out this meaning. See his note on next page.

[5] The בת יענה "female ostrich" (the תחמס probably being the male ostrich) may be so called from יען (Syr *glutton*, like its Arabic name, na'am), or from its shrill cry, ענה.

stripped and naked: [a] I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the * owls.

[a] Job xxx. 29; Ps. cii. 6. * Heb. *daughters of the owl.*

night, is very piteous. Both are *doleful creatures*, dwelling in desert and lonely places. "The jackals make a lamentable howling noise, so that travellers unacquainted with them would think that a company of people, women or children, were howling, one to another." [1] "Its howl," says an Arabic natural historian,[2] "is like the crying of an infant." "We heard them," says another,[3] "through the night, wandering around the villages, with a continual, prolonged, mournful cry." The ostrich, forsaking its young,[4] is an image of bereavement. "As the ostrich forgets her eggs and *leaves them as though they* were *not hers*, to be trampled by the feet of wild beasts, so too shall I go childless, spoiled and naked." [5] Its screech is spoken of by travellers as "fearful, affrighting." [6] "During the lonesome part of the night they often make a doleful and piteous noise. I have often heard them groan, as if they were in the greatest agonies." [7]

"I will grieve from the heart over those who perish, mourning for the hardness of the ungodly, as the Apostle had *great heaviness and continual sorrow in* his *heart* for his brethren, the impenitent and unbelieving Jews.[8] Again he saith, *Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?* [9] For by how much the soul is nobler than the body, and by how much eternal damnation is heavier

[1] Pococke, who had heard them in Syria, &c.
[2] Demiri, in Bochart, iii. 12, T. iii. p. 181, ed. Leipz. "It howls by night only." Id.
[3] Olearius, Itin. Mosc. et Pers. iv. 17, Boch. Ib., p. 183.
[4] Job xxxix. 16. [5] S. Jer.
[6] Sandys' Travels, L. ii. fin. [7] Shaw, Travels, T. ii. p. 349.
[8] Rom. ix. 2. [9] 2 Cor. xi. 29.

9 For * her wound *is* incurable; for [a] it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, *even* to Jerusalem.

* Or, she is *grievously sick of her wounds.*
[a] 2 Kings xviii. 13; Isa. i. 6, 7, 8.

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than any temporal punishment, so much more vehemently should we grieve and weep for the peril and perpetual damnation of souls, than for bodily sickness or any temporal evil." [1]

9. *For her* [Samaria's] *wound* [2] [lit. *her wounds*, or *strokes*, (the word is used especially of those inflicted by God [3]), each, one by one] *is incurable.* The idiom is used of inflictions on the body politic [4] or the mind,[5] for which there is no remedy. The *wounds* were very *sick*, or incurable, not in themselves, or on God's part, but on Israel's. The day of grace passes away at last, when man has so steeled himself against grace, as to be morally dead, having deadened himself to all capacity of repentance.

For it is come unto [*quite up to* [6]] *Judah; he* [the enemy] *is come* [lit. hath *reached*, touched] *to* [*quite up to* [6]] *the gate of my people*, even *to* [*quite up to* [6]] *Jerusalem.* "The same

[1] Dion.

[2] The construction of the E.V. is beyond question preferable to that of the E.M. It is the common emphatic idiom, in which the plural subject and singular predicate are joined to express, that the thing asserted is true not only of all generally but of each individually.

[3] Lev. xxvi. 21; Num. xi. 33; Deut. xxviii. 59, 61, &c.

[4] Nahum iii. ult. Jer. xxx. 12, 15.

[5] Jer. x. 19; xv. 18, נחלה in Nahum and Jer. xxx. 15, is exactly equivalent to the אנוש in Micah. In Jer. xxx. 12, אנוש לשברך stands parallel with it. Isaiah (xvii. 11) has באב אנוש. [6] עד in each of the three places.

10 ¶ [a] Declare ye *it* not at Gath, weep ye not at

[a] 2 Sam. i. 20.

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sin, yea, the same punishment for sin, which overthrew Samaria, shall come even unto, *quite up to, Judah.*" [1] Then the Prophet suddenly changes the gender, and, as Scripture so often does, speaks of the one agent, the centre and impersonation of the coming evil, as sweeping on over Judah, *quite up to the gate of* his *people, quite up to Jerusalem.* He does not say here whether Jerusalem would be taken; [2] and so it seems likely that he speaks of a calamity short of excision. Of Israel's wounds only he here says, that they are *incurable;* he describes the wasting of even lesser places near or beyond Jerusalem, the flight of their inhabitants. Of the capital itself he is silent, except that the enemy *reached, touched, struck* against it, *quite up to it.* Probably, then, he is here describing the first visitation of God, when *Sennacherib came up against all the fenced cities of Judah and took them,*[3] but Jerusalem was spared. God's judgments come step by step, leaving time for repentance. The same enemy, although not the same king, came against Jerusalem who had wasted Samaria. Samaria was probably as strong as Jerusalem. Hezekiah prayed; God heard, the Assyrian army perished by miracle: Jerusalem was respited for 124 years.

10. *Tell it* not *in Gath.* Gath had probably now ceased to be; at least, to be of any account.[4] It shows how David's elegy lived in the hearts of Judah that his words

[1] S. Jer.

[2] עַד includes the whole country, *quite up to.* It does not necessarily include the place, *quite up to* which it reaches. It does not, probably, 2 Kings xviii. 8.

[3] 2 Kings xviii. 13.

[4] See above on Amos vi. 2.

are used as a proverb (just as we do now, in whose ears it is yearly read), when, as with us, its original application was probably lost. True, Gath, reduced itself, might rejoice the more maliciously over the sufferings of Judah. But David mentions it as a chief seat of Philistine strength;[1] now its strength was gone.

The blaspheming of the enemies of God is the sorest part of His chastisements. Whence David prays, *Let not mine enemies exult over me;*[2] and the sons of Korah, *With a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me, while they say daily unto me, where* is *thy God?*[3] and Ethan, *Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice. Remember, Lord, the reproach of Thy servant—wherewith Thine enemies have reproached, O Lord, wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of Thine anointed.*[4] It is hard to part with home, with country, to see all desolate, which one ever loved. But far, far above all, is it, if, in the disgrace and desolation, God's honour seems to be injured. The Jewish people was then God's only home on earth. If *it* could be extinguished, who remained to honour Him? Victories over them seemed to their heathen neighbours to be victories over Him. He seemed to be dishonoured without, because they had first dishonoured Him within. Sore is it to the Christian to see God's cause hindered, His kingdom narrowed, the Empire of Infidelity advanced. Sorer in one way, because he knows the price of souls, for whom Jesus died. But the world is now the Church's home. "The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee!" Then, it was girt in within a few miles of territory, and sad indeed it must have been to the Prophet, to see this too hemmed in. *Tell it not in Gath,* to the sons of those who, of old, defied God.

[1] Parallel with Ashkelon.
[2] Ps. xxv. 2.
[3] Ps. xlii. 10.
[4] Ps. lxxxix. 42, 50.

all: in the house of * Aphrah [a] roll thyself in the dust.

* That is, *dust*. [a] Jer. vi. 26.

Weep not at all [lit. *weeping*,[1] *weep not*]. Weeping is the

[1] The conjecture of Reland (Pal. p. 534) "in Acco weep not," as if בכו were for בעכו, is against the Hebrew idiom, and one of the many abuses of Hebrew parallelism, as if Hebrew writers were tied down to exactness of parallelism, and because the Prophet mentions the name of a city in two clauses, he must in the third. The Prophet never would have used one of the commonest idioms in Hebrew, the emphatic use of the Inf. Abs. with the finite verb, unless he had meant it to be understood, as any one must understand the three Hebrew words, בכו אל תבכו. The sacred writers wrote to be understood. It is contrary to all principles of language not to take a plain idiom in its plain sense. The Verss. Vulg. Aq. Symm. so render it. The LXX (from a reading in which, ὀι Ἐνακείμ or ὀι ἐν Ἀχείμ, Reland made his ὀι ἐν Ἀχώ) is full of blunders. They render also תבכו as if it were תבנו, ἀνοικοδομεῖτε; בבית, ἐξ δικου; לעפרה κατα-γέλωτα. The ע is but seldom omitted in Hebrew. (Of the instances given by Gesenius, p. 976, בל for בעל is the Chaldee name of the idol; בי for בעי uncertain, at most; למו for לעמו (Ps. xxviii. 8) wrong.) There remains then, in Hebrew, only the single pronunciation of Amos נשקה for נישקעה, viii. 8. Robinson observes: "The Semitic letter ע in particular, so unpronounceable by other nations, has a remarkable tenacity. Of the very many Hebrew names containing this letter, which still survive in Arabic, our lists exhibit only two or three in which it has been dropped; and perhaps none in which it has been exchanged for another letter" (i. 255, n. 2). His only instances are Jib for Gibeon (where the whole syllable has been dropped), i. 456; Jelbon for Gilboa (ii. 316); Yafa for Yaphia, Joshua xix. 12; (doubtful) ii. 342; and Endor (which I doubt) ii. 360. Anyhow, they are but three names, in which, in the transfer into another

stillest expression of grief. We speak of "weeping in silence." Yet this also was too visible a token of grief. Their weeping would be the joy and laughter of God's enemies.

In the house of Aphrah [probably, *In Bethleaphrah*] *roll thyself in the dust* [better, as the text, *I roll myself in dust*[1]]. The Prophet chose unusual names, such as would associate themselves with the meanings which he wished to convey, so that thenceforth the name itself might recall the prophecy. As if we were to say, "In Ashe I roll myself in ashes." There was an Aphrah near Jerusalem.[2] It is more likely that Micah should refer to this, than to the Ophrah in Benjamin.[3] He showed them, in his own person, how they should mourn, retired out of sight and hidden, as it were, in the dust. "Whatever grief your heart may have, let your face have no tears; go not forth, but, *in the house of dust*, sprinkle thyself with the ashes of its ruins."[4]

All the places thenceforth spoken of were in Judah, whose sorrow and desolation are repeated in all. It is one

though cognate language, ע has been dropped at the end, and one at the beginning of a word, none in the middle. In fact also Acco (Acre) was probably never in the possession of Israel. It is only mentioned in the Old Testament, to say that *Asher did not drive out* its *inhabitants* (Judges i. 31). This interpretation, which has become popular, (1) violates the Hebrew idiom; (2) implies a very improbable omission of a "tenacious letter"; (3) is historically unnatural, in that the Prophet would thus forbid Judah to weep in a city where there were none even of Israel. Yet of late, it has been followed by Hitz. Maur. Umbreit, Ewald, thought probable by Gesenius and Winer, and adopted even by Dr. Henderson.

[1] The Kethib התפלשתי is, as usual, to be preferred to the correction, the Kri, התפלשי.

[2] R. Tanchum of Jerusalem, here.

[3] Joshua xviii. 23; 1 Sam. xiii. 17.

[4] S. Jer. Rup.

11 Pass ye away, * thou † inhabitant of Saphir, having thy [a] shame naked: the inhabitant of ‡ Zaanan came not forth in the mourning of § Bethezel; he shall receive of you his standing.

* Or, *thou that dwellest fairly.* † Heb. *inhabitress.*
[a] Isa. xxvii. 4 and xl. 2, 3; Jer. xiii. 22; Nahum iii. 5.
‡ Or, *the country of flocks.* § Or, *a place near.*

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varied history of sorrow. The names of her cities, whether in themselves called from some gifts of God, as Shaphir (*beautiful;* we have *Fair*ford, *Fair*field, *Fair*burn, *Fair*light), or contrariwise from some defect, Maroth, *Bitterness* (probably from brackish water) Achzib, *lying* (doubtless from a winter-torrent which in summer failed), suggest, either in contrast or by themselves, some note of evil and woe. It is Judah's history in all, given in different traits; her "beauty" turned into shame; herself free neither to go forth nor to "abide"; looking for good and finding evil; the strong (Lachish) strong only to flee; like a brook that fails and deceives; her *inheritance* (Mareshah) inherited; herself, taking refuge in dens and caves of the earth, yet even there found, and bereft of her glory. Whence, in the end, without naming Judah, the Prophet sums up her sorrows with one call to mourning.

11. *Pass ye away* [lit. *Pass thou* (fem.) *away to* or *for yourselves,*[1] disregarded by God and despised by man], *pass* the bounds of your land into captivity, *thou inhabitant of Shaphir, having thy shame naked* [better, *in nakedness,* and *shame*[2]]. *Shaphir* [*fair*] was a village in Judah, between Eleutheropolis and Ashkelon.[3] There are still, in the

[1] עברי לכם.

[2] The construction, עריה בשת, is like ענוה צדק *meekness, righteousness,* Ps. xlv. 5; בשת is the quality, *shame.*

[3] Onom.

12 For the inhabitant of Maroth * waited carefully

* Or, *was grieved.*

Shephelah, two villages called Sawafir.[1] It, once *fair*, should now go forth in the disgrace and dishonour with which captives were led away.

The inhabitants of Zaanan came not forth. *Zaanan* [*abounding in flocks*] was probably the same as Zenan of Judah, which lay in the Shephēlah.[2] It, which formerly *went forth*[3] in pastoral gladness with the multitude of its flocks, shall now shrink into itself for fear.

The mourning of Beth-Ezel [lit. *house of root*, firmly rooted] *shall take from you its standing.*[4] It too cannot help itself, much less be a stay to others. They who have been wont to go forth in fulness, shall not go forth then, and they who abide, strong though they be, shall not furnish an abiding place. Neither in going out nor in remaining, shall anything be secure then.

12. *For the inhabitant of Maroth* [*bitternesses*] *waited carefully for good.* She *waited carefully*[5] for the good which

[1] Scholz, Reisen, p. 255; Robinson, ii. 34, says, "There are three villages of this name near each other." "There is yet a village Suaphir, two hours SE. of Ashdod," Schwartz (of Jerusalem), Das Heil. Land, p. 87; "a Sapheria one hour NW. of Lod" [Lydda], (Ib. p. 105).

[2] Joshua xv. 37. "There is a village Zanabra, one hour SE. of Moresha," Schwartz, 74.

[3] צאן, whence צאן, is itself probably connected with יצא.

[4] I have preferred the division of the Syr. and Vulg. because, if joined as in the E.V., the last clause has no definite subject, and there is no allusion to the meaning of Bethhaezel.

[5] חול is used in the sense of יחל, Gen. viii. 10, and in Hif, Judges iii. 25, in Pil, Job xxvi. 15, and in Hithpal, Ps. xxxvii. 7. Here too it has the construction of יחל with ל, as it has in Job xxvi., and as it has not in the sense of the E.M., "was

for good: but [a] evil came down from the LORD unto the gate of Jerusalem.

[a] Amos iii. 6.

God gives, not for the Good which God *is*. She looked, longed for, good, as men do; but therewith her longing ended. She longed for it, amid her own evil, which brought God's judgments upon her. *Maroth* is mentioned here only in Holy Scripture, and has not been identified. It too was probably selected for its meaning. *The inhabitant of bitternesses, she,* to whom *bitternesses*, or, it may be, *rebellions,*[1] were as the home in which she dwelt, which ever encircled her, in which she reposed, wherein she spent her life, *waited for good!* Strange contradiction! yet a contradiction, which the whole un-Christian world is continually enacting; nay, from which Christians have often to be awakened, to look for good to themselves, nay, to pray for temporal good, while living in bitternesses, bitter ways, displeasing to God. The words are calculated to be a religious proverb. "Living in sin," as we say, *dwelling in bitternesses, she looked for good! Bitternesses!* for it is *an evil* thing *and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that My fear* is *not in thee.*[2]

But [*For*] *evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem.* It came, like the brimstone and fire which God rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah, but as yet *to the gate of*

grieved." Such an idiom as חול לטוב, "to be in pain for (lost) good," does not occur in Hebrew, and would be equivocal, since the idiom *is* used for "longed for (expected) good." חול also, "grieved," occurs only Jer. v. 3. Used of the "writhing" of the birth-pangs, it is joined with no preposition; in the sense "feared," it is joined only with the מן, מפני, מלפני, of the object of fear.

[1] מרתים from מרה occurs Jer. l. 21. [2] Jer. ii. 19.

13 O thou inhabitant of [a] Lachish, bind the chariot

[a] 2 Kings xviii. 14, 17.

Jerusalem, not upon itself. "Evil came down upon them from the Lord, *i.e. I* was grieved, *I* chastened, *I* brought the Assyrian upon them, and from *My* anger came this affliction upon them. But it was removed, *My* hand prevailing and marvellously rescuing those who worshipped My Majesty. For the trouble shall *come to the gate*. But we know that Rabshakeh, with many horsemen, came to Jerusalem and all but touched the gates. But he took it not. For in one night the Assyrian was consumed."[1] The two *for's* are seemingly co-ordinate, and assign the reasons of the fore-announced evils,[2] on man's part and on God's. On man's, in that he looked for what could not so come, good; on God's, in that evil, which alone could be looked for, which, amid man's evil, could alone be good for man, came from Him. Losing the true Good, man lost all other good, and dwelling in the bitterness of sin and provocation, he dwelt indeed in bitterness of trouble.

13. *O thou inhabitant of Lachish, bind the chariot to the swift beast* [*steed*]. Lachish was always a strong city, as its name probably denoted (probably "compact"[3]). It was one of the royal cities of the Amorites, and its king one of the five

[1] S. Cyr. [2] 3–11.

[3] From the Arab. The biliteral root לך seems to have been an onomato-poet. In Arabic the sense of "striking" occurs in לכך, לכא, לכת, לכח, לכד, לכז, לכץ, לכע, לכם. Thence the idea of parts "impinging on one another," "cleaving close to," in לכא, לכת, לכד [griping, לכז]; לבי; "cleaving close together," "compact," in לכך, לכד, לבע. These senses account for all the Arabic words, beginning with לך. The only Hebrew roots, so beginning, are לכד, "took," and לכיש.

to the swift beast: she *is* the beginning of the sin

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who went out to battle with Joshua.[1] It lay in the low country, Shephēlah, of Judah,[2] between Adoraim and Azekah,[3] seven Roman miles S. of Eleutheropolis,[4] and so, probably, close to the hill-country, although on the plain; partaking perhaps of the advantages of both. Rehoboam fortified it. Amaziah fled to it from the conspiracy at Jerusalem,[5] as a place of strength. It, with Azekah, alone remained, when Nebuchadnezzar had taken the rest, just before the capture of Jerusalem.[6] When Sennacherib took *all the defenced cities of Judah*, it seems to have been his last and proudest conquest, for from it he sent his contemptuous message to Hezekiah.[7] The whole power of the great king seems to have been called forth to take this stronghold. The Assyrian bas-reliefs, the record of the conquests of Sennacherib, if (as the accompanying inscription is deciphered) they represent the taking of Lachish, exhibit it as "a city of great extent and importance, defended by double walls with battlements and towers, and by fortified outworks. In no other sculptures were so many armed warriors drawn up in array against a besieged city. Against the fortifications had been thrown up as many as ten banks or mounts compactly built—and seven battering-rams had already been rolled up against the walls."[8] Its situation, on the extremity probably of the plain, fitted it for a depôt of cavalry. *The swift steeds*,[9] to which it was bidden to bind the chariot, are mentioned as part of the magnificence of

[1] Joshua x. 3. [2] Ib. xv. 33, 39. [3] 2 Chron. xi. 9.
[4] Onom. [5] 2 Kings xiv. 19. [6] Jer. xxxiv. 7.
[7] Isa. xxxvi. 1, 2. [8] Layard, Nin. and Bab., p. 149.
[9] The רכש was undoubtedly a swift horse, probably from its rapid striking of the earth (Arab.). The word is used of riding horses in Syr. Chald. Talm. Nasor.; see Ges.; "horses of good breed and young," R. Jonah in Kim. ib.

to the daughter of Zion: for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee.

Solomon, as distinct from his ordinary horses.[1] They were used by the posts of the king of Persia.[2] They were doubtless part of the strength of the kings of Judah, the cavalry in which their statesmen trusted, instead of God. Now, its swift horses in which it prided itself should avail but to flee. Probably, it is an ideal picture. Lachish is bidden to bind its chariots to horses of the utmost speed, which should carry them far away, if their strength were equal to their swiftness. It had great need; for it was subjected under Sennacherib to the consequences of Assyrian conquest. If the Assyrian accounts relate to its capture, impalement and flaying alive[3] were among the tortures of the captive people; and awfully did Sennacherib, in his pride, avenge the sins against God Whom he disbelieved.

She is *the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion.* "She was as the gate through which the *transgressions of Israel* flooded Judah."[4] How she came first to apostatise and to be the infectress of Judah, Scripture does not tell us.[5] She scarcely bordered on Philistia; Jerusalem lay between her and Israel. But the course of sin follows no geographical lines. It was the greater sin to Lachish that she, locally so far removed from Israel's sin, was the first to import into Judah the idolatries of Israel. Scripture does not say what seduced Lachish herself, whether the pride of military strength, or her importance, or commercial intercourse, or her *swift steeds*, with Egypt, the common parent of Israel's

[1] 1 Kings iv. 28, Eng. (v. 8, Heb.).
[2] Esther viii. 10, 14. [3] Layard, ib. and 150. [4] S. Jer.
[5] Rosenm. and others from him, by mistake, attribute it to a supposed situation of Lachish, "lying on the frontier of" Israel; whereas it was part of the chain of fortified cities furthest removed from Israel on the SW.

14 Therefore shalt thou [a] give presents * to More-
sheth-gath: the houses of † [b] Achzib *shall be* a lie
to the kings of Israel.

[a] 2 Sam. viii. 2; 2 Kings xviii. 14, 15, 16.
* Or, *for.* † That is, *a lie.* [b] Josh. xv. 44.

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and her sin. Scripture does not give the genealogy of her sin, but stamps her as the heresiarch of Judah. We know the fact from this place only, that she, apparently so removed from the occasion of sin, became, like the propagators of heresy, the authoress of evil, the cause of countless loss of souls. *Beginning of sin to*—, what a world of evil lies in the three words![1]

14. *Therefore shalt thou give* [*bridal*] *presents to Moresheth Gath. Therefore!* since Judah had so become a partaker of Israel's sins, she had broken the covenant, whereby God had given her the land of the Heathen, and she should part with it to aliens. The *bridal presents*, lit. *the dismissals*, were the dowry[2] with which the father *sent away*[3] his daughter, to belong to another, her *lord*[4] or husband, never more to return. *Moresheth* [lit. *inheritance*], the *inheritance* which God gave her, was to be parted with; she was to be laden[5] with gifts to the enemy. Judah should part with her, and her own treasure also.

The houses of Achzib shall be a lie. Achzib, so called probably from *a winter brook* (achzab) was to become what its name imported, a resource which should fail just in the

[1] ראשית חמאת ל. [2] 1 Kings ix. 16.
[3] Judges xii. 9. [4] בעל.
[5] שלוחים על מורשת גת, lit. "bridal presents on Moresheth Gath." Hitzig thinks that in מורשת there is an allusion to מארשת, "espoused"; but this would be a contradictory image, since the bridal presents were given in espousing, not to one already espoused, and they were to be given not to Gath but to the invader.

15 Yet will I bring an heir unto thee, O inhabitant

time of need, as the winter brooks in the drought of summer. *Wilt Thou be unto me as a failing brook, waters which are not sure?*[1] This Achzib, which is recounted between Keilah and Mareshah,[2] was probably one of the oldest towns of Palestine, being mentioned in the history of the patriarch Judah.[3] After having survived above 1000 years, it should, in time of need, fail. *The kings of Israel* are here the kings of Judah. When this prophecy was to be accomplished, the ten tribes would have ceased to have any political existence, the remnant in their own land would have no head to look to, except the line of David, whose good kings had a care for them. Micah then, having prophesied the utter destruction of Samaria, speaks in accordance with the state of things which he foresaw and foretold.[4]

15. *Yet will I bring an heir* [*the heir*,[5] him whom God had appointed to be *the heir*, Sennacherib] *unto thee, O inhabitant of Mareshah. Mareshah* (as the original form of its name denotes[6]), lay on the summit of a hill. "Its ruins only were still seen," in the time of Eusebius and S. Jerome, "in the second mile from Eleutheropolis."[7] "Foundations still remain on the south-eastern part of the remarkable Tell, south of Beth-Jibrin."[8] Rehoboam fortified it also.[9] Zerah the Æthiopian had *come to* it,[10] probably to besiege it, when Asa met him, and *God smote the Æthiopians before* him, *in the valley of Zephathah* thereat. In the wars of the Maccabees, it was in the hands of the Edomites.[11] Its capture and that of Adora are mentioned[12] as the last act of the war, before

[1] Jer. xv. 18.
[2] Joshua xv. 44.
[3] In the unlengthened form כזיב Gen. xxxviii. 5.
[4] See above, Introduction.
[5] הירש.
[6] מראשה (from ראש), Joshua xv. 44.
[7] Onom.
[8] Rob. ii. 67, 68.
[9] 2 Chron. xi. 8.
[10] Ib. xiv. 9 sqq.
[11] Jos. Ant. xii. 8, 6.
[12] Ib. xiii. 9, 1.

of [a] Mareshah : * he shall come unto [b] Adullam the glory of Israel.

[a] Josh. xv. 44. * Or, *the glory of Israel shall come, &c.* [b] 2 Chron. xi. 7.

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the Edomites submitted to John Hyrcanus, and were incorporated in Israel. It was a powerful city,[1] when the Parthians took it. As Micah writes the name, it looked nearer to the word "inheritance."[2] *Mareshah* [*inheritance*] shall yet have *the heir* of God's appointment, the enemy. It shall not inherit the land, as promised to the faithful, but shall itself be inherited, its people dispossessed. While it (and so also the soul now) held fast to God, they were the heritage of the Lord, by His gifts and grace ; when, of their own free-will, those, once God's heritage, become slaves of sin, they passed and still pass, against their will, into the possession of another master, the Assyrian or Satan.

He [i.e. the heir, the enemy] *shall come unto Adullam, the glory of Israel ;*[3] i.e. he who shall dispossess Mareshah, *shall come quite unto Adullam*, where, as in a place of safety, *the glory of Israel*, all in which she gloried, should be laid up. Adullam was a very ancient city, being mentioned in the history of the patriarch Judah,[4] a royal city.[5] It too lay in the Shephelah ;[6] it was said to be ten[7] or twelve[8] miles east of Eleutheropolis ; but for this, there seems to be scarcely place in the Shephelah. It was one of the fifteen cities fortified by Rehoboam ;[9] one of the sixteen towns, in which (with their dependent villages) Judah settled after the captivity.[10] It contained the

[1] Jos. Ant. xiv. 13, 9.

[2] מרשה like מורשה. In the Chron. it is spelled as in Micah.

[3] The Eng. Marg. has, in the same general sense, *unto Adullam shall come the glory of Israel.*

[4] Gen. xxxviii. 1, 12, 20. [5] Joshua xii. 15. [6] Ib. xv. 35.
[7] Eus. [8] S. Jer. [9] 2 Chron. xi. 7. [10] Neh. xi. 30.

16 Make thee [a] bald, and poll thee for

[a] Job i. 20; Isa. xv. 2 and xxii. 12; Jer. vii. 29, xvi. 6, xlvii. 5, and xlviii. 37.

whole army of Judas Maccabæus.[1] Like Lachish, it had probably the double advantages of the neighbourhood of the hills and of the plain, seated perhaps at the roots of the hills, since near it doubtless was the large *cave of Adullam* named from it. The line of caves, fit for human habitation, which extended from Eleutheropolis to Petra, began westward of it. "The valley which runs up from Eleutheropolis eastward is full of large caves; some would hold thousands of men. They are very extensive, and some of them had evidently been inhabited. . . . The outer chamber of one cavern was 270 feet long by 126 feet wide; and behind this were recesses and galleries, probably leading to other chambers which we could not explore. The massive roof was supported by misshaped pieces of the native limestone left for that purpose, and at some places was domed quite through to the surface, admitting both light and air by the roof."[2] The name of *Adullam* suggested the memory of that cave, the refuge of the patriarch David, the first of their line of kings, in extreme isolation and peril of his life. Thither, the refuge now of the remaining *glory of Israel*, its wealth, its trust, its boast—the foe should come. And so there only remained one common dirge for all.

16. *Make thee bald, poll* [lit. *shear*[3]] *thee for thy delicate children.* Some special ways of cutting the hair were forbidden to the Israelites, as being idolatrous customs, such as the rounding the hair in front, cutting it away from the temples,[4] or between the eyes.[5] All shearing of the hair

[1] 2 Macc. xii. 38. [2] Rev. G. Williams, MS. letter.
[3] See on Amos viii. 10.
[4] Lev. xix. 27, against Arab idolatry. See Herod. iii. 8.
[5] Deut. xiv. 1.

thy [a] delicate children; enlarge thy baldness

[a] Lam. 4, 5.

was not forbidden;[1] indeed to the Nazarite it was commanded, at the close of his vow. The removal of that chief ornament of the countenance was a natural expression of grief, which revolts at all personal appearance. It belonged, not to idolatry, but to nature.[2] *Thy delicate children.* The change was the more bitter for those tended and brought up delicately. Moses from the first spake of special miseries which should fall on *the tender and very delicate. Enlarge thy baldness;* outdo in grief what others do; for the cause of thy grief is more than that of others. The point of comparison in *the eagle* might either be the actual baldness of the head, or its moulting. If it were the baldness of the head, the word translated *eagle*,[3] although mostly used of the eagle itself,

[1] As Hitzig says.

[2] See Job i. 20; early Greece (Il. 23, 46, 135 sqq., Alcestis 429); non-Egyptian nations (Herod. ii. 36); Persians (ib. ix. 24); Scythians (ib. iv. 71); Thessalians, Macedonians (Plut. Pelop. 34).

[3] The etymology (Arab. *nasara*, "tore with the beak") belongs rather to the eagle with its sharp, than to the vulture with its long, piercing beak. (The Kamoos, Freytag's authority for rendering *nasr* "vulture," only says "a bird," adding that it is the name of "the constellation," *i.e.* Aquila. In Ulug Begh Tab. Stell., 49, 50, the *okab* and the *nasr* both occur as names of the constellation. Kazwini in Ideler (Sternkunde, p. 385) says that the 'okab is three stars of the form of the flying nasr.) Leo. Afr. (Descr. Afr. ix. 56) says that "the largest species of eagle is called Nesir." Unless *nesher* be the golden eagle, there is no Hebrew name for it, whereas it is still a bird of Palestine, and smaller eagles are mentioned in the same verse, Lev. xi. 13; viz. *the ossifrage*, פרס, and *the black eagle*, עזניה, so called from its strength, like the valeria, of which Pliny says, "the melanætos

might here comprehend the vulture.[1] For entire baldness is so marked a feature in the vulture, whereas the "bald-headed eagle" was probably not a bird of Palestine.[2] On

or valeria, least in size, remarkable for strength, blackish in colour," x. 3. The same list of unclean birds contains also the *vulture*, דיה, Deut. xiv. 13 (as it must be, being a gregarious bird, Is. xxxiv. 15), in its different species; (Deut. ib.) *the gier-eagle*, i.e. geyer (vulture) eagle, gypaetos, or vultur percnopterus (Hasselquist, Forskal, Shaw, Bruce in Savigny, p. 77) partaking of the character of both (רחם Lev. xi. 18, Deut. xiv. 17); together with the *falcon* (דאה Lev. xi. 14); and *hawk*, with its subordinate species (נץ למינהו) Lev. xi. 18; Deut. xiv. 15.

[1] In this case, *nesher*, being a name taken from a quality common to birds of prey, might at once be a generic term, corresponding to the modern term (aves), *rapaces*, and might also designate what all account the king of birds. Its Greek name ἀετὸς is doubtless the Hebrew עיט (Bochart ii. 2, p. 170), a generic name for birds of prey. The Gypaetos forms a link between the vulture and the eagle. Seeing the prey afar, lofty flight out of human sight, strength of pinion, building nests in the rocks, attributed in Scripture to the *nesher*, belong also to the vulture. The feeding on dead bodies belongs especially to the vulture, although affirmed of eagles also if the body be not decayed. The Arabic *nasr* seems to comprise the vulture also. See in Boch. ii. 27, T. iii. p. 79 sqq. Leipz. Savigny says, "Nisr is a generic name which has always been translated Aquila, but now the people and Arabic naturalists use it to designate the great vulture" (Descr. de l'Eg. i. 73); and of 'Okab, "'Okab is a generic name, but it becomes specific for the small black eagle which, properly speaking, is the 'Okâb." (Ib. 85.)

[2] "The only 'bald-headed eagle' is an American rather than an European species. Though it is not exclusively of the new world, it is yet rarely seen in the old, and then chiefly in the northern latitudes." Dr. Rolleston, MS. letter, who kindly guided me to the modern authorities quoted above.

as the eagle; for they are gone into captivity from thee.

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the other hand, David, who lived so long among the rocks of Palestine, and Isaiah seem to have known of effects of moulting upon the *eagle* in producing (although in a less degree than in other birds) a temporary diminution of strength, which have not in modern times been commonly observed. For David says, *Thou shalt renew, like the eagle, thy youth*,[1] which speaks of fresh strength after temporary weakness; and Isaiah,[2] *They that trust in the Lord shall put forth*[3] *fresh strength; they shall put forth pinion-feathers*[4] *like*

[1] Ps. ciii. 5. [2] xl. 31.

[3] יחליפו כח, חלף to *succeed to* (as in Arab. whence Chaliph) is used of the fresh shoots of grass (Ps. xc. 5, 6), of the stump of a felled tree, putting forth fresh suckers (Job xiv. 7), then, causatively, of the *putting forth fresh strength*, in contrast with the exhaustion and utter stumbling of the young and strong. In Arab. conj. iv., one of its many special meanings is "put forth fresh feathers" after moulting.

[4] Bochart ii. 1, T. ii. p. 745. So the LXX πτεροφυήσουσιν. S. Jer. assument pennas. So also Syr. Saad. חעלה is used of bringing flesh on the bones (Ezek. xxxvii. 6), putting on the figures of cherubim on the veil (2 Chron. iii. 14); gold on a shield (1 Kings x. 17); dress (2 Sam. i. 24; Amos viii. 10). The E.V. (lit. "they shall ascend a pinion [*i.e.* with a pinion] like eagles") would not be too bold, but for the correspondence of Ps. ciii. 5. The word אבר, rendered *wings* E.V., is, in Ezek. xvii. 3, distinguished from the *wing* itself and the *plumage*; as is אברה, Job xxxix. 13. In Ps. lxviii. 14, אברות must be the pinion-feathers, not the pinions; and so אברה in Ps. xci. 4. In Job xxxix. 26, the denom. יאבר might mean the same (Boch. ib.), the first hemistich describing the acquiring the new feathers, the second the emigration of the hawks. The radical meaning of אבר is strength.

eagles, comparing the fresh strength which should succeed to that which was gone, to the eagle's recovering its strong pinion-feathers. Bochart, however, says unhesitatingly, "At the beginning of spring, the rapacious birds are subject to shedding of their feathers which we call moulting."[1] If this be so, the comparison is yet more vivid. For the baldness of the vulture belongs to its matured strength and could only be an external likeness. The moulting of the eagle involves some degree of weakness, with which he compares Judah's mournful and weak condition amid the loss of their children, gone into captivity.[2]

Thus closes the first general portion of the prophecy. The people had cast aside its own glory, God; now its sons, its pride and its trust, shall go away from it.

"The eagle, laying aside its old feathers and taking new, is a symbol of penitence and of the penitents who lay

[1] Bochart, Hieroz. ii. 1, pp. 744, 745. The Kamoos quotes, among the ten characteristics of the *Anook* (the Rachma, Heb. רחם), "It flies in the time of shedding its feathers and is not emperilled in its young plumage, &c." Boch. ii. 26, T. iii. p. 57. Demetrius Const. in his Ἱερακοσοφ, gives remedies for making fresh feathers put forth fast (c. xvii.), and grow quick (c. xviii.), and against diseases in moulting (c. xxxii.), showing that birds of prey are liable to the same laws as other birds. See Buffon, Hist. Nat. i. 44, 45, 69, 70. Cuvier says, "In certain states of moulting, you see in the plumage [of the royal eagle] the white at the base of the feathers. It is then called Falco Canadensis" (Règne Animal). To this Grey adds, that the names Melanaetos and Mogilnik (in Gmelin) only describe it when moulting (Cuvier, Anim. Kingd. vi. 33). So then the change at moulting is so great, that the royal eagle, when moulting, has been thought to be four different species.

[2] In Greek also the loss of wealth by pillage is compared to moulting, not in Aristoph. Av., 284–6, only, but in Philostratus, "he moults as to the wealth," p. 273.

aside their former evil habits, and become other and new men. True but rare form of penitence!"[1] S. Gregory the Great thus applies this to the siege of Rome by the Lombards. "That happened to her which we know to have been foretold of Judea by the Prophet, *Enlarge thy baldness like the eagle.* For baldness befalls man in the head only, but the eagle in its whole body; for, when it is very old, its feathers and pinions fall from all its body. She lost her feathers, who lost her people. Her pinions too fell out, with which she was wont to fly to the prey; for all her mighty men, through whom she plundered others, perished. But this which we speak of, the breaking to pieces of the city of Rome, we know has been done in all the cities of the world. Some were desolated by pestilence, others devoured by the sword, others racked by famine, others swallowed by earthquakes. Despise we them with our whole heart, at least, when brought to nought; at least with the end of the world, let us end our eagerness after the world. Follow we, wherein we can, the deeds of the good."[2] One whose commentaries S. Jerome had read, thus applies this verse to the whole human race. "O soul of man! O city, once the mother of saints, which wast formerly in Paradise, and didst enjoy the delights of different trees, and wast adorned most beautifully, now being cast down from thy place aloft, and brought down unto Babylon, and come into a place of captivity, and having lost thy glory, make thee bald and take the habit of a penitent; and thou who didst fly aloft like an eagle, mourn thy sons, thy offspring, which from thee is led captive."

[1] Lap. [2] In Ezek. Hom. 18, fin. L.

CHAPTER II

1 *Against oppression.* 4 *A lamentation.* 7 *A reproof of injustice and idolatry.* 12 *A promise of restoring Jacob.*

WOE to them [a] that devise iniquity, and [b] work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because [c] it is in the power of their hand.

[a] Hosea vii. 6. [b] Ps. xxxvi. 4. [c] Gen. xxxi. 29.

CHAP. II. The Prophet had declared that evil should come down on Samaria and Jerusalem for their sins. He had pronounced them sinners against God; he now speaks of their hard unlovingness towards man, as our Blessed Lord in the Gospel speaks of sins against Himself in His members, as the ground of the condemnation of the wicked. The time of warning is past. He speaks as in the person of the Judge, declaring the righteous judgments of God, pronouncing sentence on the hardened, but blessing on those who follow Christ. The sins thus visited were done with a high hand; first, with forethought:

1. *Woe*, all woe, woe from God; "the woe of temporal captivity; and, unless ye repent, the woe of eternal damnation, hangeth *over* you."[1] *Woe to them that devise iniquity.* They *devise* it, "they are not led into it by others, but invent it out of their own hearts."[2] They plot and forecast and fulfil it even in thought, before it comes to act. *And work evil upon their beds.* Thoughts and imaginations of evil are works of the soul.[3] *Upon their beds*,[4] which ought to be the place of holy thought, and of communing with their own hearts and with God.[5] Stillness

[1] Dion. [2] Rup. Rib. [3] Ps. lviii. 2
[4] See Ps. xxxvi. 4. [5] Ib. iv. 4.

2 And they covet [a] fields, and take *them* by violence; and houses, and take *them* away: so they [*] oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.

[a] Isa. v. 8. [*] Or, *defraud.*

must be filled with thought, good or bad; if not with good, then with bad. The chamber, if not the sanctuary of holy thoughts, is filled with unholy purposes and imaginations. Man's last and first thoughts, if not of good, are especially of vanity and evil. The Psalmist says,[1] *Lord, have I not remembered Thee in my bed, and thought upon Thee when I was waking?* These men thought of sin on their bed, and did it on waking. *When the morning is light*, lit. *in the light of the morning*, i.e. instantly, shamelessly, not shrinking from the light of day, not ignorantly, but knowingly, deliberately, in full light. Nor again through infirmity, but in the wantonness of might, *because it is in the power of their hand*,[2] as, of old, God said, *This they begin to do, and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do.*[3] "Impiously mighty, and mighty in impiety."[4]

See the need of the daily prayer,[5] "Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin"; and "Almighty God, Who hast brought us to the beginning of this day, defend us in the same by Thy mighty power, that we may fall into no sin," &c. The illusions of the night, if such be permitted, have no power against the prayer of the morning.

2. *And they covet fields and take* them *by violence* [*rend*

[1] lxiii. 6.

[2] This phrase can have no other meaning, Gen. xxxi. 29; Prov. iii. 27; nor the corresponding phrase with the negative, Deut. xxviii. 32; Neh. v. 5.

[3] Gen. xi. 6. [4] Rup. [5] From Lap.

3 Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, against [a] this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall

[a] Jer. viii. 3.

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them *away*], *and houses, and take* them *away*. Still, first they sin in heart, then in act. And yet, with them, to covet and to rob, to desire and to take, are the same. They were prompt, instantaneous, without a scruple, in violence. So soon as they coveted, they took.[1] Desired, acquired! Coveted, robbed! "They saw, they coveted, they took," had been their past history. They did violence, not to one only, but, touched with no mercy, to whole families, their little ones also; *they oppressed a man and his house*. They spoiled not goods only, but life, *a man and his inheritance;* destroying him by false accusations or violence and so seizing upon his inheritance.[2] Thus Ahab first coveted Naboth's vineyard, then, through Jezebel, slew him; and "they *who devoured widows' houses*, did at the last plot by night against Him of Whom they said, *Come let us kill Him and the inheritance shall be ours; and in the morning, they practised it*, leading Him away to Pilate."[3] "Who of us desires not the villas of this world, forgetful of the possessions of Paradise? You see men join field to field, and fence to fence. Whole places suffice not to the tiny frame of one man."[4] "Such is the fire of concupiscence, raging within, that, as those seized by burning fevers cannot rest, no bed suffices them, so no houses or fields content these. Yet no more than seven feet of earth will suffice them soon."[5] "Death only owns, how small the frame of man."[6]

3. Such had been their habitual doings. They had done

[1] The force of חמדו ונזלו.

[2] Comp. the woes, Isa. v. 7, on oppression; 8, covetousness.

[3] Theoph. [4] S. Jer. [5] Rib. [6] Juv. Sat. x. 172, 173.

not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: [a] for this time *is* evil.

[a] Amos v. 13; Eph. v. 16.

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all this, he says, as one continuous act, up to that time. They were habitually *devisers of iniquity, doers of evil.*[1] It was ever-renewed. By night they sinned in heart and thought; by day, in act. And so he speaks of it in the present. *They do it.*[2] But, although renewed in fresh acts, it was one unbroken course of acting. And so he also uses the form, in which the Hebrews spoke of uninterrupted habits, *They have coveted, they have robbed, they have taken.*[3] Now came God's part.

Therefore, thus saith the Lord, since they oppress whole families, *behold* I will set Myself *against this* whole *family*;[4] since they *devise iniquity, behold I* too, Myself, by Myself, in My own Person, *am devising*. Very awful is it, that Almighty God sets His own Infinite Wisdom against the devices of man and employs it fittingly to punish. "I am devising no common punishment, but one to bow them down without escape; *an evil from which*—He turns suddenly to them, *ye shall not remove your necks, neither shall ye go haughtily.*" "Pride then was the source of that boundless covetousness,"[5] since it was pride which was to be bowed down in punishment. The punishment is proportioned to the sin. They had done all this in pride; they should have the liberty and self-will wherein they had wantoned, tamed or taken from them. Like animals with a heavy yoke upon them, they should live in disgraced slavery. The ten tribes were never able to *withdraw their necks* from the yoke. From the two tribes God removed it after the seventy years. But the same sins against the love

[1] חשבי און .פעלי רע [2] .יעשוה [3] .חמדו גזלו נשאו
[4] As in Amos iii. 1. [5] Rib.

4 ¶ In that day shall *one* [a] take up a parable

[a] Hab. ii. 6.

of God and man brought on the same punishment. Our Lord again spake the woe against their covetousness.[1] It still shut them out from the service of God, or from receiving Him, their Redeemer. They still *spoiled the goods*[2] of their brethren. In the last dreadful siege, "there were insatiable longings for plunder, searching-out of the houses of the rich; murder of men and insults of women were enacted as sports; they drank down what they had spoiled, with blood."[3] And so the prophecy was for the third time fulfilled. They who withdraw from Christ's easy yoke of obedience shall not remove from the yoke of punishment; they who, through pride, will not bow down their necks, but *make* them *stiff*, shall be bent low, that they *go not* upright or *haughtily* any more. *The Lord alone shall be exalted in that Day. For it is an evil time.*[4] Perhaps he gives a more special meaning to the words of Amos,[5] that *a time of* moral *evil* will be, or will end in, *a time* full of *evil*, i.e. of sorest calamity.

4. *In that day shall one take up a parable against you.* The *mashal* or *likeness* may, in itself, be any speech in which one thing is likened to another: (1) "figured speech"; (2) "proverb," and, since such proverbs were often sharp sayings against others; (3) "taunting figurative speech." But of the person himself it is always said, he *is made, becomes a proverb.*[6] To *take up* or *utter* such a speech *against* one, is, elsewhere, followed by the speech

[1] S. Luke xvi. 13, 14; xi. 39; S. Matt. xxiii. 14, 23, 25; S. Mark xii. 40.

[2] Heb. x. 34.

[3] Jos. B. J. iv. 9, 10, add v. 1.

[4] Isa. ii. 11.

[5] v. 13.

[6] Deut. xxviii. 37; 1 Kings ix. 7; 2 Chron. vii. 20; Ps. xliv. 15; lxix. 12; Jer. xxiv. 9; Ezek. xiv. 8.

against you, and [a] lament * with a doleful lamenta-

[a] 2 Sam. i. 17. * Heb. *with a lamentation of lamentations.*

itself; *Thou shalt take up this parable against the king of Babylon, and say, &c.*[1] *Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and say, &c.*[2] Although then the name of the Jews has passed into *a proverb of reproach*,[3] this is not contained here. The parable here must be the same as the *doleful lamentation*, or dirge, which follows. No mockery is more cutting or fiendish, than to repeat in jest words by which one bemoans himself. The dirge which Israel should use of themselves in sorrow, the enemy shall take up in derision, as Satan does doubtless the self-condemnation of the damned. "Men do any evil, undergo any peril, to avoid shame. God brings before us that deepest and eternal shame,"[4] *the shame and everlasting contempt*, in presence of Himself and angels and devils and the good,[5] that we may avoid shame by avoiding evil.

And lament with a doleful lamentation. The words in Hebrew are varied inflections of a word imitating the sounds of woe. It is the voice of woe in all languages, because the voice of nature. *Shall wail a wail of woe;*[6] it is the funeral dirge over the dead,[7] or of the living doomed to die;[8] it is sometimes the measured mourning of those employed to call forth sorrow,[9] or mourning generally.[10] Among such elegies are still Zion-songs (elegies over the ruin of Zion),[11] and mournings for the dead.[12] The word *woe*

[1] Isa. xiv. 4. [2] Hab. ii. 6. [3] Jer. l.c.
[4] Rib. [5] Ps. lii. 6, 7; Isa. lxvi. 24.
[6] נהה נהי נהיה from the sounds, הוי passim, הו הו Amos v. 16; הי Ezek. ii. 10; הה, i.q. אהה Ezek. xxx. 2.
[7] Jer. xxxi. 15. [8] Ezek. xxxii. 18.
[9] Amos v. 16; Jer. ix. 17, 19.
[10] 1 Sam. vii. 2; Jer. ix. 18. [11] ציונית Fürst s.v.
[12] הזכרה Id.

tion, *and* say, We be utterly spoiled: [a] he hath

[a] i. 15.

is thrice[1] repeated in Hebrew, in different forms, according to that solemn way, in which the extremest good or evil is spoken of; the threefold blessing, morning and evening, with the thrice-repeated name of God,[2] impressing upon them the mystery which developed itself, as the Divinity of the Messiah and the personal agency of the Holy Spirit were unfolded to them. The dirge which follows is purposely in abrupt brief words, as those in trouble speak, with scarce breath for utterance. First, in two words, with perhaps a softened inflection,[3] they express the utterness of their desolation. Then, in a threefold sentence, each clause consisting of three short words, they say what God had done, but name Him not, because they are angry with Him. God's chastisements irritate those whom they do not subdue.[4]

The portion of my people He changeth;
How removeth He (it) as to *me!*
To a rebel[5] our fields He divideth.

[1] There is no plea for separating נהיה in the sense, "it has been," like "fuit Ilium." By itself נהיה would rather be, "it came to pass." אמר also, which follows, explains what the proverb and dirge is, as in Isaiah and Habakkuk. The single word נהיה, actum est, is no dirge. The feminine and masculine together make up a whole as in Isa. iii. 1; or it might stand as a superlative, as in the Eng. Marg.

[2] Num. vi. 24–26.

[3] שדוד נשדנו, the ֹ for the ו repeating the sound *oo*.

[4] See on Amos vi. 10.

[5] שובבה, "backsliding," occurs Jer. xxxi. 22, and, of Ammon, xlix. 4. This rendering is favoured by the contrast between the לי and the לשובב, and gives an adequate meaning to the ל in the לשובב; whereas, as part of the infinitive, it is superfluous, and unusual as superfluous.

changed the portion of my people: how hath he

They act the patriot. They, the rich, mourn over "the portion of *my* people" (they say) which they had themselves despoiled: they speak (as men do) as if things were what they ought to be: they hold to the theory and ignore the facts. As if, because God had divided it to His people, therefore it so remained! as if, because the poor were in theory and by God's law provided for, they were so in fact! Then they are enraged at God's dealings. *He removeth* the portion *as to me;* and to whom giveth He our fields? *To a rebel!* the Assyrian, or the Chaldee. They had deprived the poor of their portion of *the Lord's land.*[1] And now they marvel that God resumes the possession of His own, and requires from them, not the fourfold[2] only of their spoil, but His whole heritage. Well might Assyrian or Chaldee, as they did, jeer at the word *renegade. They* had not forsaken their gods;—but Israel, what was its whole history but a turning back? *Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet* are *no gods? But My people have changed their glory for* that which *doth not profit.*[3]

Such was the meaning in their lips. The word *divideth* had the more bitterness, because it was the reversal of that first *division* at the entrance into Canaan. Then, with the use of the same word,[4] the division of the land of the heathen was appointed to them. Ezekiel, in his great symbolic vision, afterwards prophesied the restoration of Israel, with the use of this same term.[5] Joel spoke of the parting of their land, under this same term, as a sin of the heathen.[6]

[1] See on Hosea ix. 3.

[2] Exod. xxii. 1; 2 Sam. xii. 6; S. Luke xix. 8.

[3] Jer. ii. 11.

[4] Num. xxvi. 53, 55, 56; Joshua xiii. 7; xiv. 5; xviii. 2, 5, 10; xix. 51.

[5] xlvii. 21. [6] iv. 2 [iii. 2, Eng.].

removed *it* from me ! * turning away he hath divided our fields.

* Or, *instead of restoring.*

Now, they say, God *divideth our fields*, not to us, but to the Heathen, whose lands He gave us. It *was* a change of act: in impenitence, they think it a change of purpose or will. But what lies in that, *we be utterly despoiled?* Despoiled of everything: of what they felt, temporal things; and of what they did not feel, spiritual things. Despoiled of the land of promise, the *good things* of this life, but also of the Presence of God in His Temple, the grace of the Lord, the image of God and everlasting glory. *Their portion* was *changed*, as to themselves and with others. As to themselves, riches, honour, pleasure, their own land, were changed into want, disgrace, suffering, captivity; and yet more bitter was it to see others gain what they by their own fault had forfeited. As time went on, and their transgression deepened, the exchange of the portion of that former people of God became more complete. The casting-off of the Jews was the grafting-in of the Gentiles. *Seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles.*[1] And so they who were *no people*,[2] became *the people of God*, and they who were His people, became, for the time, *not My people:*[3] and *the adoption of sons, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service* of God, *and the promises*, came to us Gentiles, since to us Christ Himself our *God blessed for ever* came, and made us His.[4]

How hath He removed. The words do not say what *He* removed. They thought of His gifts, the words include

[1] Acts xiii. 46.
[2] Rom. x. 19.
[3] Hosea i. 9.
[4] Rom. ix. 4, 5.

5 Therefore thou shalt have none that shall [a] cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the LORD.

[a] Deut. xxxii. 8, 9.

Himself.[1] They say How! in amazement. The change is so great and bitter, it cannot be said. Time, yea eternity cannot utter it. *He hath divided our fields.* The land was but the outward symbol of the inward heritage. Unjust gain, kept back, is restored with usury; *it taketh away the life of the owners thereof.*[2] The vineyard whereof the Jews said, *the inheritance shall be ours*, was taken from them and given to others, even to Christians. So now is that awful change begun, when Christians, leaving God, their only unchanging Good, turn to earthly vanities, and, for the grace of God which He withdraws, have these only for their fleeting portion, until it shall be finally exchanged in the Day of Judgment. *Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.*[3]

Israel defended himself in impenitence and self-righteousness. He was already the Pharisee. The doom of such was hopeless. The Prophet breaks in with a renewed *Therefore.* He had already prophesied that they should lose the lands which they had unjustly gotten, the land which they had profaned. He had described it in their own impenitent words. Now on the impenitence he pronounces the judgment which impenitence entails, that *they* should not be restored.

5. *Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the Lord. Thou*, in the first instance, is the impenitent Jew of that day. God had promised by

[1] יָמִישׁ is mostly transitive; it was intransitive, ii. 3, and is so (if not Kal), Prov. xvii. 13.

[2] Prov. i. 19. [3] S. Luke xvi. 25.

6 *†[a] Prophesy ye not, *say they to them that*

* Or, *Prophesy not as they prophesy.*
† Heb. *Drop, &c.*, Ezek. xxi. 2.
[a] Isa. xxx. 10; Amos ii. 12 and vii. 16.

Hosea [1] to restore Judah; shortly after, the Prophet himself foretells it.[2] Now he forewarns these and such as these, that they would have no portion in it. They had *neither part nor lot in this matter.*[3] They, the not-Israel then, were the images and ensamples of the not-Israel afterwards, those who seem to be God's people and are not; members of the body, not of the soul of the Church; who have a sort of faith, but have not love. Such was afterwards the *Israel after the flesh*, which was *broken off*, while the true Israel was restored, passing out of themselves into Christ. Such, at the end, shall be those who, being admitted by Christ into *their portion*, renounce the world in word not in deed. Such shall have "[4] no portion for ever *in the congregation of the Lord.* For *nothing defiled shall enter there, nor whatsoever worketh abomination or a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*" [5]

The ground of their condemnation is their resistance to light and known truth. These not only *entered not in* themselves, but, being hinderers of God's word, *them that were entering in* they *hindered.*[6]

6. *Prophesy ye not*, say they to them that *prophesy; they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame.* The words are very emphatic in Hebrew, from their briefness, *Prophesy not; they shall indeed prophesy; they shall not prophesy to these; shame shall not depart.*[7] The people, the false prophets, the politicians, forbade God and Micah

[1] See on Hosea v. 11. [2] ii. 12. [3] Acts viii. 21.
[4] Rib. [5] Rev. xxi. 27. [6] S. Luke xi. 52.
[7] Poc. gives this distribution of the words from Abulwalid *v.* נטף.

prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, *that* they shall not take shame.

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to prophesy: *Prophesy not.* God, by Micah, recites their prohibition to themselves, and forewarns them of the consequences.

Prophesy ye not, lit. *drop not.* Amaziah and the God-opposing party had already given an ungodly meaning to the word.[1] "Drop not," "distil not," thus unceasingly, these same words, ever warning, ever telling of *lamentation and mourning and woe;*[2] *prophesying not good concerning* us, *but evil.*[3] So their descendants *commanded* the Apostles *not to speak at all or to teach in the Name of Jesus.*[4] *Did we not straitly command you, that ye should not teach in this Name?*[5] *This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law.*[6] God answers, *They shall certainly prophesy.* The Hebrew word is emphatic.[7] The Prophets had their commission from God, and Him they must obey, whether Israel *would hear or whether they would forbear.*[8] So must Micah and Isaiah[9] now, or Jeremiah,[10] Ezekiel, and the rest afterwards. *They shall not prophesy to these.* He does not say only, *They shall not prophesy to them*, but, *to these;* i.e. they shall prophesy to others who would receive their words: God's word would not be stayed; they who would hearken shall never be deprived of their portion; but *to these* who despise, *they shall not prophesy.* It shall be all one, as though they did not prophesy; the soft rain shall not bedew *them.* The barn-floor shall be dry, while the fleece is moist.[11] So God says by Isaiah,[12] *I will also*

[1] See on Amos vii. 16.
[2] Ezek. ii. 10.
[3] 1 Kings xxii. 18.
[4] Acts iv. 18; v. 40.
[5] Ib. v. 28.
[6] Ib. vi. 13.
[7] יטיפון.
[8] Ezek. ii. 5, 7.
[9] xxviii. 9–14, 22.
[10] i. 7, 17; xxvi. 10–15.
[11] Judges vi. 37.
[12] v. 6.

7 ¶ O *thou that art* named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the LORD * straitened? *are* these his

* Or, *shortened?*

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command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. The dew of God's word shall be transferred to others. But so *shame* [lit. *shames*,[1] manifold shame], *shall not depart*, but shall rest upon them for ever. God would have turned away the shame from them; but they, despising His warnings, drew it to themselves. It was the natural fruit of their doings; it was in its natural home with them. God spake to them that they might be freed from it. They silenced His Prophets; deafened themselves to His words; so it *departed not.* So our Lord says, *Now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth;*[2] and S. John Baptist, *The wrath of God abideth on him.*[3] It hath not now first to come. It is not some new thing to be avoided, turned aside. The sinner has but to remain as he is; the shame encompasseth him already, and only *departeth* not. The *wrath of God* is already upon him, and *abideth on him.*

7. *O thou* that art *named the house of Jacob;* as Isaiah says,[4] *Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel—which make mention of the God of Israel, not in truth, nor in righteousness. For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel.* They boasted of what convicted them of faithlessness. They relied on being what in spirit they had ceased to be, what in deeds they denied, children of a believing forefather. It is the same temper which we see more at large in their descendants: *We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest Thou, ye shall be made*

[1] כלמות as ישועות, omnignæ salutes, manifold salvation.
[2] S. John ix. 41. [3] Ib. iii. 36. [4] xlviii. 1.

doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh * uprightly?

* Heb. *upright?*

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free?[1] *Abraham is our Father.*[2] It is the same which S. John Baptist and our Lord and S. Paul reproved. *Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to* our *father.*[3] *If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. Now ye seek to kill Me, a Man that hath told you the truth—This did not Abraham.*[4] *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh.—Behold thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His Will and approvest the things that are more excellent—&c.*[5] The Prophet answers the unexpressed objections of those who forbade to prophesy evil. "Such could not be of God," these said; "for God was pledged by His promises to *the house of Jacob.* It would imply change in God, if He were to cast off those whom He had chosen." Micah answers, "Not God is changed, but you." God's promise was to Jacob, not to those who were but *named* Jacob, who called themselves after the name of their father, but did not his deeds. *The Spirit of the Lord was not straitened,*[6] so that He was less long-suffering than heretofore. *These,* which He threatened and of which they complained, were *not His doings,* not what He of His own Nature did, not what He loved to do, not His, as the Author or Cause of them, but *theirs.* God is Good, but to those who can receive good, *the upright in heart.*[7] *God is only Loving unto Israel.* He is all Love;

[1] S. John viii. 33. [2] Ib. viii. 39. [3] S. Matt. iii. 9.
[4] S. John viii. 39, 40. [5] Rom. ii. 17–28.
[6] קצר רוח (as in part Zech. xi. 8), as opposed to ארך אפים (Exod. xxxiv. 6, &c., longanimis, long-suffering) and i.q. קצר אפים, Prov. xx. 17, coll. 29. [7] Ps. lxxiii. 1.

8 Even * of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe † with the garment

* Heb. *yesterday.* † Heb. *over against a garment.*

nothing but [1] Love: all His ways are Love; but it follows, unto *what* Israel, the true Israel, *the pure of heart. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth;* but to whom? *unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.*[2] *The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting;* but *unto them that fear Him.*[3] But, they becoming evil, His good became to them evil. Light, wholesome and gladdening to the healthful, hurts weak eyes. That which is straight cannot suit or fit with the crooked. Amend your crookedness, and God's ways will be straight to you. *Do not My words do good?* He doth speak *good words and comfortable words.*[4] They are not only *good*, but *do good. His word is with power.*[5] Still it is with those who *walk uprightly;* whether those who forsake not, or those who return to, the way of righteousness. God flattereth not, deceiveth not, promiseth not what He will not do. He cannot *speak peace where there is no peace.*[6] As He saith, *Behold the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity, but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness.*[7] God Himself could not make a heaven for the proud or envious. Heaven would be to them a hell.

8. *Even of late* [lit. *yesterday* [8]]. "He imputeth not past sins, but those recent and, as it were, of yesterday." [9] *My people is risen up vehemently.*[10] God upbraideth them

[1] The force of אך.
[2] Ps. xxv. 10.
[3] Ps. ciii. 17; S. Luke i. 50.
[4] Zech. i. 13.
[5] S. Luke iv. 32.
[6] Jer. vi. 14.
[7] Rom. xi. 22.
[8] אתמול is i.q. אתמול, in Isa. xxx. 33.
[9] S. Jer.
[10] יקומם, in Isaiah (xliv. 26; lviii. 12; lxi. 4) transitive, but only of the raising up, rebuilding of ruins. The use of קומם

from them that pass by securely as men averse from war.

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tenderly by the title, *Mine own people*, as S. John complaineth,[1] *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.* God became not *their* enemy, but they arose as one man—*is risen up*, the whole of it, as *His*. In Him they might have had peace and joy and assured gladness, but they arose in rebellion against Him, requiting Him evil for good (as bad Christians do to Christ), and brought war upon their own heads. This they did by their sins against their brethren. Casting off the love of man, they alienated themselves from the love of God.

Ye pull off [*strip off violently* [2]] *the robe with the garment*, lit. *over against the cloak*. The *salmah* [3] is the large enveloping cloak which was worn loosely over the other dress, and served by night for a covering.[4] *Eder*,[5] translated *robe*, is probably not any one garment, but the remaining dress, the comely, becoming [6] array of the person. These they stripped violently off from persons, peaceable, unoffending,

actively in that one sense is no ground for taking it so, where the idea is different. To *raise up* an adversary is expressed by הקים, Micah v. 4; Amos vi. 14; 1 Kings xi. 14, and so raising up evil also.

[1] i. 11. [2] תפישטון. This is intensive, as in Arabic.

[3] שלמה here and Exod. xxii. 8, i.q. שמלה, elsewhere.

[4] Deut. xxii. 17.

[5] אדר occurs here only. There is no ground to identify it with the well-known אדרת. It is not likely that the common garment should have been called, this once, by a different name; nor that the אדרת, a wide enfolding garment (see on Jonah iii. 6), should have been worn together with the שלמה.

[6] This meaning seems to lie in the root; comp. *στολή*, array, apparel, dress.

9 The * women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever.

* Or, *wives.*

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off their guard, *passing by securely, men averse from war* [1] and strife. These they stripped of their raiment by day, leaving them half-naked, and of their covering for the night. So making war against God's peaceful people, they, as it were, made war against God.

9. *The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses* [lit. *from her pleasant house*], each from her home. These were probably the widows of those whom they had stripped. Since the houses were theirs, they were widows; and so their spoilers were at war with those whom God had committed to their special love, whom He had declared the objects of His own tender care, *the widows and the fatherless.* The widows they *drove vehemently forth,* [2] as having no portion in the inheritance which God had given them, as God had driven out their enemies before them, each *from her pleasant house*, the home where she had lived with her husband and children in delight and joy.

From [*off*] *their* [*young* [3]] *children have ye taken away My glory.* Primarily, the glory, comeliness, was the fitting

[1] שובי is doubtless an adjective form, distinct from the participle שבי (Isa. lix. 20), like סורי, Jer. ii. 21.

[2] תגרשון is doubly intensive, as the intensive form with the emphatic ן. It is the word used of God's driving out the nations before Israel (Exod., Judges, &c.), or of man being driven out of Paradise (Gen. iii. 24), Hagar being cast out (Gen. xxi. 10). The word itself, by its rough sound, expresses the more of harshness; and that as opposed to softness, תענוגיה. This is the same word as that rendered *delicate*, i. 16.

[3] סעל עוללים.

10 Arise ye, and depart; for this *is* not *your*

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apparel which God had given them,[1] and laid upon them,[2] and which these oppressors stripped *off* from them. But it includes all the gifts of God, wherewith God would array them. Instead of the holy home of parental care, the children grew up in want and neglect, away from all the ordinances of God, it may be, in a strange land. *For ever.* They never repented, never made restitution; but so they incurred the special woe of those who ill-used the unprotected, the widow, and the fatherless. The words *for ever* anticipate the punishment. The punishment is according to the sin. They never ceased their oppression. They, with the generation who should come after them, should be deprived of God's *glory*, and cast out of His land for ever.

10. *Arise ye and depart.* Go your way, as being cast out of God's care and land. It matters not whither they went. *For this is not your rest.* As ye have done, so shall it be done unto you. As ye cast out the widow and the fatherless, so shall ye be cast out; as ye gave no rest to those *averse from war*, so shall ye have none. *He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.*[3] The land was given to them as a temporary rest, a symbol and earnest of the everlasting rest to the obedient. So Moses spake, *Ye are not as yet come to the rest*[4] *and the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, and when He giveth you rest*[5] *from your enemies round about, so that ye dwell in safety, &c.*[6] And Joshua,[7] *Remember the word*

[1] As Hosea ii. 11, דגני I. H. Mich.
[2] Ezek. xvi. 14, Id.
[3] Rev. xiii. 10.
[4] אל המנוחה, the same word.
[5] הניח.
[6] Deut. xii. 9, 10, add 1 Kings viii. 56.
[7] i. 13.

[a] rest: because it is [b] polluted, it shall destroy *you*, even with a sore destruction.

[a] Deut. xii. 9. [b] Lev. xviii. 25, 28; Jer. iii. 2.

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which Moses commanded you, saying, The Lord your God giveth you rest.[1] But the Psalmist had warned them, that, if they hardened their hearts like their forefathers, they too would *not enter into* His *rest.*[2]

Because it is polluted [lit. *because of* its *pollution*[3]] by idolatry, by violence, by uncleanness. So Moses (using the same word) says, *the land is defiled*[4] by the abominations of the heathen; and warns them, *that the land spue you not out, when you defile it as it spued out the nations which were before you.* Ezekiel speaks of that *defilement,*[5] as the ground why God expelled Israel.[6] *It shall destroy you, even with a sore* [lit. *sharp*] *destruction.*[7] It is a sore thing to abuse the creatures of God to sin, and it is unfit that we should use what we have abused. Hence Holy Scripture speaks, as though even the inanimate creation took part with God, *made subject to vanity, not willingly,* and could not endure those who employed it against His Will.

The words, *Arise, depart ye, for this is not your rest,* became a sort of sacred proverb, spoken anew to the soul,

[1] מניח. [2] Ps. xcv. 11, comp. למנוחתך Ps. cxxxii. 8, מנוחתי14.
[3] As pointed in most accurate copies, without Metheg.
[4] תטמא Lev. xviii. 27, בטמאכם 28. [5] Ezek. xxxvi. 17.
[6] Ib. xxxvi. 18, add Jer. ii. 7.
[7] This is the common rendering of חבל. Others, with Sal. B. Mel. have understood it of travail-pains (Cant. viii. 5; Ps. vii. 15), but this would have the opposite sense of bringing forth, re-birth, not of ejection (see Isa. lxvi. 8). The sharp bitter pang would express the pains of travail, not its fruitlessness or that they were cast out any whither. Fruitlessness of travail-pangs is expressed, if intended (as in Isa. xxvi. 18).

11 If a man * [a] walking in the spirit and falsehood
do lie, *saying*, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and

* Or, *walk with the wind, and lie falsely.* [a] Ezek. xiii. 3.

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whenever it would find rest out of God. "We are bidden to think of no rest for ourselves in any things of the world; but, as it were, *arising* from the dead, to stretch upwards, and walk after the Lord our God, and say, *My soul cleaveth hard after Thee.* This, if we neglect, and will not hear Him Who saith, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*, we shall indeed slumber, but shall be deceived and shall not find rest; for where Christ enlighteneth not the risen soul, what seemeth to be rest, is trouble."[1] All rest is wearisome which is not in Thee, O our God.

11. *If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood*, lit. *in spirit* [not *My* Spirit] *and falsehood*, i.e. in a lying spirit; such as they, whose woe Ezekiel pronounces, *Woe unto the foolish prophets who walk after their own spirit and what they have not seen;*[2] *prophets out of their own hearts,*[3] who *prophesied a vision of falsehood, and a destruction and nothingness;*[4] *prophesied falsehood; yea, prophets of the deceit of their hearts.*[5] These, like the true prophets, *walked in spirit;* as Isaiah speaks of *walking in righteousness,*[6] and Solomon of one *walking in the frowardness of the mouth.*[7] Their habitual converse was in a spirit, but of falsehood. If such an one *do lie*, saying, *I will prophesy unto thee of wine and strong drink.* Man's conscience must needs have

[1] S. Jer. [2] Ezek. xiii. 3. [3] Ib. xiii. 2, 17.

[4] Jer. xiv. 14, חזון שקר, as here רוח ושקר.

[5] Ib. xxiii. 26, add נבאים שקר, ib. xxvii. 10, 14, 16; or בשקר, ib. xxix. 9; נבאי חלמות שקר, ib. xxiii. 32.

[6] xxxiii. 15, הלך צדקות.

[7] הולך עקשות פה Prov. vi. 12, elsewhere with ב.

of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.

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some plea in speaking falsely of God. The false prophets had to please the rich men, to embolden them in their self-indulgence, to tell them that God would not punish. They doubtless spoke of God's temporal promises to His people, the land *flowing with milk and honey*, His promises of abundant harvest and vintage, and assured them that God would not withdraw these, that He was not so precise about His law. Micah tells them in plain words what it all came to: it was a prophesying of *wine and strong drink*.

He shall even be the prophet of this people, lit. *and shall be bedewing this people*. He uses the same words which scorners of Israel and Judah employed in forbidding to prophesy. They said, *drop not*; forbidding God's word as a wearisome dropping. It wore away their patience, not their hearts of stone. He tells them, *who* might speak to them without wearying, of *whose* words they would never tire, *who* might do habitually[1] what they forbade to God,—one who, in the Name of God, set them at ease in their sensual indulgences. This is the secret of the success of everything opposed to God and Christ. Man wants a God. God has made it a necessity of our nature to crave after Him. Spiritual, like natural, hunger, debarred from or loathing wholesome food, must be stilled, stifled, with what will appease its gnawings. Our natural intellect longs for Him; for it cannot understand itself without Him. Our restlessness longs for Him; to rest upon. Our helplessness longs for Him, to escape from the unbearable pressure of our unknown futurity. Our imagination craves for Him; for, being made for the Infinite, it cannot be content with the finite. Aching affections long for Him; for no creature

[1] The force of היה מטיף.

12 ¶ [a] I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of

[a] Micah iv. 6, 7.

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can soothe them. Our dissatisfied conscience longs for Him to teach it and make it one with itself. But man does not want to be responsible, nor to owe duty; still less to be liable to penalties for disobeying. The Christian, not the natural man, longs that his whole being should tend to God. The natural man wishes to be well rid of what sets him ill at ease, not to belong to God. And the horrible subtlety of false teaching, in each age or country, is to meet its own favourite requirements, without calling for self-sacrifice or self-oblation, to give it a god, such as it would have, such as might content it. "The people willeth to be deceived, be it deceived,"[1] is a true proverb. Men *turn away their ears from the truth*[2] which they dislike; and so *are turned unto fables* which they like. They who *receive not the love of the truth,—believe a lie.*[3] If men *will not retain God in their knowledge*, God *giveth them over to an undistinguishing mind.*[4] They who would not receive our Lord, coming in His Father's Name, have ever since, as He said, *received* them *who came in their own.*[5] Men teach their teachers how they wish to be mistaught, and receive the echo of their wishes as the Voice of God.

12. *I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel.* God's mercy on the penitent and believing being the end of all His threatenings, the mention of it often bursts in abruptly. Christ is ever the Hope as the End of prophecy, ever before the prophets' mind. The earthquake and fire precede the still small voice of peace in Him. What seems then sudden to us, is

[1] "Populus vult decipi, decipiatur."
[2] 2 Tim. iv. 4.
[3] 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.
[4] Rom. i. 28.
[5] S. John v. 43.

thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;

connected in truth. The Prophet had said,[1] where was not their rest and how they should be cast forth; he saith at once how they should be gathered to their everlasting rest. He had said, what promises of the false prophets would *not* be fulfilled.[2] But, despair being the most deadly enemy of the soul, he does not take away their false hopes, without showing them the true mercies in store for them. "Think not," he would say, "that I am only a prophet of ill. The captivity foretold will indeed now come, and God's mercies will also come, although not in the way which these speak of."[3] The false prophets spoke of worldly abundance ministering to sensuality, and of unbroken security. He tells of God's mercies, but after chastisement, to *the remnant of Israel*. But the restoration is complete, far beyond their then condition. He had foretold the desolation of Samaria,[4] the captivity of Judah;[5] he foretells the restoration of *all Jacob*, as one. The images are partly taken (as is the Prophet's wont) from that first deliverance from Egypt.[6] *Then*, as the image of the future growth under persecution, God multiplied His people exceedingly;[7] then *the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way;*[8] then God *brought them up*[9] *out of the house of bondage*.[10] But their future prison-house was to be no land of Goshen. It was to be a captivity and a dispersion at once, as Hosea had already foretold.[11] So he speaks of them emphatically,[12] as a great throng, *assembling*

[1] ver. 10. [2] ver. 11. [3] S. Jer.
[4] i. 6. [5] i. 16; ii. 4. [6] Hengst. Christ. i. 499.
[7] Exod. i. 12. [8] Ib. xiii. 21.
[9] Exod. iii. 8, 17; Lev. xi. 45. The people *went up*, Exod. xiii. 18, add xii. 38; i. 10. [10] See below, vi. 4.
[11] See on Hosea vi. 11; ix. 17.
[12] אסף אאסף, קבץ אקבץ.

I will put them together [a] as the sheep of Bozrah,

[a] Jer. xxxi. 10.

I will assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; gathering I will gather the remnant of Israel. The word, which is used of the gathering of a flock or its lambs,[1] became, from Moses' prophecy,[2] a received word of the gathering of Israel from the dispersion of the captivity.[3] The return of the Jews from Babylon was but a faint shadow of the fulfilment. For, ample as were the terms of the decrees of Cyrus,[4] and Artaxerxes,[5] and widely as that of Cyrus was diffused,[6] the restoration was essentially that of Judah, i.e. Judah, Benjamin, and Levi:[7] the towns, whose inhabitants returned, were those of Judah and Benjamin;[8] the towns, to which they returned, were of the two tribes. It was not a gathering of *all Jacob;* and of the three tribes who returned, there were but few gathered, and they had not even an earthly king, nor any visible Presence of God. The words began to be fulfilled in the *many*[9] *tens of thousands* who believed at our Lord's first Coming; and

[1] Isa. xl. 11; xiii. 14.

[2] Deut. xxx. 3, 4; see Neh. i. 9.

[3] See below, iv. 6; Ps. cvi. 47; cvii. 3; Isa. xi. 12; xliii. 5; liv. 7; lvi. 8; Zeph. iii. 19, 20; Jer. xxiii. 3; xxix. 14; xxxi. 8, 10; xxxii. 37; Ezek. xi. 17; xx. 34, 41; xxviii. 25; xxxiv. 13; xxxvii. 21; xxxviii. 8; xxxix. 27; Zech. x. 10.

[4] Ezra i. 2–4. [5] Ib. vii. 13. [6] Ib. i. 1.

[7] Ib. i. 5; ii. 1; iv. 1; x. 7, 9. Josephus, who alone mentions that Ezra sent a copy of Artaxerxes' letter to him, "to all those of his nation who were in Media," and that "many of them, taking their property, came to Babylon, longing for the return to Jerusalem," adds, "but the whole people of Israelites [i.e. the great mass] remained where they were." Ant. xi. 5, 2.

[8] Ezra ii; Neh. vii. [9] μυριάδες, Acts xxi. 20.

as the flock in the midst of their fold : [a] they shall make great noise by reason of *the multitude of* men.

[a] Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

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all Jacob, that is, all who were Israelites indeed, *the remnant according to the election of grace*,[1] were gathered within the one fold of the Church, under One Shepherd. It shall be fully fulfilled, when, in the end, *the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved*.[2] *All Jacob* is the same as *the remnant of Israel*, the true Israel which remains when the false severed itself off; all the seed-corn, when the chaff was winnowed away. So then, whereas they were now scattered, *then*, God saith, *I will put them together* [in one fold] *as the sheep of Bozrah*, which abounded in sheep,[3] and was also a strong city of Edom ;[4] denoting how believers should be fenced within the Church, as by a strong wall, against which the powers of darkness should not prevail, and the wolf should howl around the fold, yet be unable to enter it, and Edom and the heathen should become part of the inheritance of Christ.[5] *As a flock in the midst of their fold*, at rest, "like sheep, still and subject to their shepherd's voice. So shall these, having one faith, and One Spirit, in meekness and simplicity, obey the one rule of truth. Nor shall it be a small number ;"[6] for the place where they shall be gathered shall be too narrow to contain them, as is said in Isaiah : *Give place to me, that I may dwell*.[7]

They shall make great noise (it is the same word as our *hum*, "the hum of men") *by reason of the multitude of men*. He explains his image, as does Ezekiel, *And ye are My flock, the flock of My pasture ; men* are *ye ; I, your God, saith*

[1] Rom. xi. 5. [2] Ib. xi. 25, 26. [3] Isa. xxxiv. 6.
[4] See on Amos i. 12. [5] See on Amos ix. 12.
[6] Rup. [7] xlix. 20.

13 The breaker is come up before them: they

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the Lord God:[1] and, *As a flock of holy things, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be full of a flock of men, and they shall know that I am the Lord.*[2] So many shall they be, that "throughout the whole world they shall make a great and public sound in praising God, filling Heaven and the green pastures of Paradise with a mighty hum of praise;" as St. John saw *a great multitude, which no man could number,*[3] "with one united voice praising the Good Shepherd, Who smoothed for them all rugged places, and evened them by His Own Steps, Himself the Guide of their way and the *Gate* of Paradise, as He saith, *I am the Door;* through Whom, *bursting through* and *going before*, being also the Door of the way, the flock of believers shall break through *It.* But this Shepherd is their *Lord* and *King.*"[4] Not their King only, but the Lord God; so that this, too, bears witness that Christ is God.

13. *The Breaker is come up* (*gone up*) *before them; they have broken up* (*broken through*[5]), and have passed *the gate, and have gone forth.* The image is not of conquest, but of deliverance. They *break through*, not to enter in but to *pass through the gate* and *go forth.* The wall of the city is ordinarily *broken through*, in order to make an entrance,[6] or to secure to a conqueror the power of entering in[7] at any

[1] Ezek. xxxiv. 31.
[2] Ib. xxxvi. 38.
[3] Rev. vii. 9.
[4] Rup.
[5] פרץ is to *break through*, as, enemies surrounding one, 2 Sam. v. 20; 1 Chron. xiv. 11; *break in pieces* so as to scatter, Ps. lx. 3; *break through or down* a wall (see references in 30, 31, 33); and with ב, burst *upon*," of God's inflictions, Exod. xix. 22, 24; 2 Sam. vi. 8; Ps. cvi. 29; 1 Chron. xiii. 11; xv. 13.
[6] Ps. lxxx. 13; lxxxix. 41; Isa. v. 5; Neh. ii. 13.
[7] Prov. xxv. 28; 2 Kings xiv. 13; 2 Chron. xxv. 23; xxvi. 6.

have broken up, and have passed through the

time, or by age and decay.[1] But here the object is expressed, to *go forth*. Plainly then they were confined before, as in a prison; and the gate of the prison was burst open, to set them free. It is then the same image as when God says by Isaiah: *I will say to the North, Give up; and to the South, Hold not back*,[2] or, *Go ye forth of Babylon, say ye, the Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob*;[3] or, with the same reminiscence of God's visible leading of His people out of Egypt, *Depart ye, depart ye; for ye shall not go out with haste, nor yet by flight, for the Lord God shall go before you, and the God of Israel* will be *your rereward*;[4] or as Hosea describes their restoration:[5] *Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together and appoint themselves one Head, and they shall go up out of the land*.[6] Elsewhere, in Isaiah, the spiritual meaning of the deliverance from the prison is more distinctly brought out, as the work of our Redeemer: *I will give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house*;[7] *and, the Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening* of the prison *to* them that are *bound*.[8]

From this passage, the "Breaker-through" was one of the titles of the Christ, known to the Jews,[9] as One Who

[1] 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. [2] Isa. xliii. 6. [3] Ib. xlviii. 20.

[4] Ib. lii. 11, 12, תצאו, as here יצאו; and הלך לפניכם corresponding to עלה לפניכם.

[5] i. 11 (ii. 2 Heb.).

[6] עלו מן הארץ in reference to Egypt, as here עלה.

[7] Isa. xlii. 6, 7. [8] Ib. lxi. 1.

[9] Huls. Theol. Jud., pp. 143, 144.

gate, and are gone out by it: and [a] their king

[a] Hosea iii. 5.

should be "from below and from above"[1] also; and from it they believed that "captives should come up from Gehenna, and the Shechinah,"[2] or the Presence of God, "at their head." "He then, Who shall break the way, the King and Lord Who shall *go up before them*, shall be the Good Shepherd, Who puts them together in the fold. And this He doth when, as He saith, *He putteth forth His own sheep, and He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him, for they know His Voice.*[3] How doth He go before them but by suffering for them, leaving them an example of suffering, and opening the entrance of Paradise? The Good Shepherd *goeth up* to the Cross, *and is lifted up from the earth, laying down* His *Life for* His *sheep*, to *draw all men unto* Him.[4] He *goeth up*, trampling on death by His Resurrection; He *goeth up* above the heaven of heavens, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, opening the way before them, so that the flock, in their lowliness, may arrive where the Shepherd went before in His Majesty. And when He thus breaketh through and openeth the road, they also *break through and pass through the gate and go out by it*, by that Gate, namely, whereof the Psalmist saith, *This is the Gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter into It.*[5] What other is this *Gate* than that same Passion of

[1] R. Mos. Haddars. in Mart. Pug. Fid. p. 432. It is interpreted of the Messiah in the Bereshith Rabba, § 48, f. 47, 2 (Schöttg. de Mess. p. 61), the Echa Rabbathi, f. 60, 2 (Ib. p. 69), the Pesikta Rabbathi, f. 60, 1 (Ib. p. 135), and the Midrash Mishle, ad c. vi. 1 (Ib. ad loc. p. 212). So also Jonathan, Rashi, Tanchum, Abarbanel in Poc.

[2] Quoted by Pearson on the Creed, Art. 6, note *y*.

[3] S. John x. 4. [4] Ib. 15; xii. 32. [5] Ps. cxviii. 20.

Christ, beside which there is no gate, no way whereby any can enter into life? Through that open portal, which the lance of the soldier made in His Side when crucified, and *there came thereout Blood and Water, they shall pass and go through*, even as the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea, which divided before them, when Pharaoh, his chariots and horsemen, were drowned."[1] "He will be in their hearts, and will teach and *lead* them; He will show them the way of salvation, *guiding their feet into the way of peace*,[2] and they shall pass through the strait and narrow gate which leadeth unto life; of which it is written, *Enter ye in at the strait gate; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*[3] *And their King shall pass before them*, as He did, of old, in the figure of the cloud, of which Moses said, *If Thy Presence go not, carry us not up hence; and wherein shall it be known that I have found grace in Thy sight, I and Thy people, is it not in that Thou goest up with us?*[4] and as He then did when He passed out of this world to the Father. *And the Lord on* (that is, *at*) *the head of them*, as of His army."[5] "For *the Lord is His Name*, and He is the Head, they the members; He the King, they the people; He the Shepherd, they the sheep of His pasture. And of this *passing through* He spake, *By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.*[6] For a man *entereth in*, when, receiving the faith, he becomes a sheep of this Shepherd, and *goeth out*, when he closeth this present life, and then findeth the pastures of unfading, everlasting life;"[1] "passing from this pilgrimage to his home, from faith to sight, from labour to reward."[5] Again, as describing the Christian's life here, it speaks of progress. "Whoso shall have entered in, must not remain in the

[1] Rup. [2] S. Luke i. 79. [3] S. Matt. vii. 13, 14.
[4] Exod. xxxiii. 15, 16. [5] Dion. [6] S. John x. 9.

shall pass before them, [a] and the LORD on the head of them.

[a] Isa. lii. 12.

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state wherein he entered, but must *go forth* into the pasture; so that, in entering in should be the beginning, in *going forth and finding pasture*, the perfecting of graces. He who entereth in, is contained within the bounds of the world; he who goeth forth, goes, as it were, beyond all created things, and, counting as nothing all things seen, shall *find pasture* above the Heavens, and shall feed upon the Word of God, and say, *The Lord is my Shepherd* (and feedeth me), *I can lack nothing.*[1] But this going forth can only be through Christ; as it followeth, *and the Lord at the head of them.*"[2] Nor, again, is this in itself easy, or done for us without any effort of our own. All is of Christ. The words express the closeness of the relation between the Head and the members; and what He, our King and Lord, doth, they do, because He Who did it for them, doth it in them. The same words are used of both, showing that what they do, they do by virtue of His Might, treading in His steps, walking where He has made the way plain, and by His Spirit. What they do, they do, as belonging to Him. He *breaketh through*, or, rather, in all is *the Breaker-through*. They, having broken through, *pass* on, because He *passeth before them*. He will *break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron.*[3] He *breaketh through* whatever would hold us back or oppose us, all might of sin and death and Satan, as Moses opened the Red Sea, for *a way for the ransomed to pass over;*[4] and so He saith, *I will go before thee, I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron, and I will*

[1] Ps. xxiii. 1.
[2] S. Jer.
[3] Isa. xlv. 2.
[4] Ib. li. 10.

CHAPTER III

1 *The cruelty of the princes.* 5 *The falsehood of the prophets.* 8 *The security of them both.*

AND I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob,

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give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places.[1] So then Christians, following Him, the *Captain of their salvation*, strengthened by His grace, must burst the bars of the flesh and of the world, the chains and bonds of evil passions and habits force themselves through the narrow way and narrow gate, do violence to themselves, *endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.*[2] The title of our Lord, *the Breaker-through*,[3] and the saying, *they break through*, together express the same as the New Testament doth in regard to our being partakers of the sufferings of Christ—*Joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.*[4] *If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.*[5] *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.*[6]

The words may include also the removal of the souls of the just, who had believed in Christ before His Coming, into Heaven after His Resurrection, and will be fully completed when, in the end, He shall cause His faithful servants, in body and soul, to *enter into the joy of their Lord.*

CHAP. III. ver. 1. *And I said.* God's love for us is the great incitement, constrainer, vivifier of His creature's

[1] Isa. xlv. 2, 3. [2] 2 Tim. ii. 3.

[3] פרץ. It is from the same word as Pharez, Judah's son, whose birth was typical. Gen. xxxviii. 29.

[4] Rom. viii. 17. [5] 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12. [6] 1 Pet. iv. 1.

and ye princes of the house of Israel; [a] *Is it* not for you to know judgment?

[a] Jer. v. 4, 5.

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love. Micah had just spoken of God's love of Israel; how He would gather them into one fold under One Shepherd, guard them, lead them, remove all difficulties before them, be Himself their Head and enable them to follow Him. He turns then to them. These are God's doings; this, God has in store for you hereafter. Even when mercy itself shall require chastisement, He doth not cast off for ever. The desolation is but the forerunner of future mercy. What then do ye? The Prophet appeals to them, class by class. There was one general corruption of every order of men, through whom Judah could be preserved—princes,[1] prophets,[2] priests.[3] *The salt had lost its savour; wherewith could it be seasoned?* whereby could the decaying mass of the people be kept from entire corruption?

Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel. He arraigns them by the same name, under which He had first promised mercy. He had first promised mercy to *all Jacob* and *the remnant of Israel.* So now he upbraids the *heads of Jacob*, and *the princes of the house of Israel*, lest they should deceive themselves. At the same time he recalls them to the deeds of their father. Judah had succeeded to the birthright, forfeited by Reuben, Simeon, and Levi; and in Judah all the promises of the Messiah were laid up. But he was not like the three great Patriarchs, *the father of the faithful*, or the meek Isaac, or the much-tried Jacob. The name then had not the reminiscences, or force of appeal, contained in the titles, *seed of Abraham*, or Isaac, or Israel.

Is it not for you to know judgment? It is a great increase

[1] Micah iii. 1–4. [2] Ib. 5–7. [3] Ib. 11.

2 Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;

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of guilt, when persons neglect or pervert what it is their special duty and office to guard; as when teachers corrupt doctrine, or preachers give in to a low standard of morals, or judges pervert judgment. The *princes* here spoken of are so named from judging, "deciding"[1] causes. They are the same as the *rulers*, whom Isaiah at the same time upbraids, as being, from their sins, *rulers of Sodom*,[2] whose *hands* were *full of blood*.[3] They who *do* not right, in time cease, in great measure, to know it. As God withdraws His grace, the mind is darkened and can no longer see it. So it is said of Eli's sons, they *were sons of Belial, they knew not the Lord*;[4] and, *Into a malicious soul Wisdom shall not enter, nor dwell in a body that is subject unto sin*.[5] Such "attain not to know *the judgments of God*, which are *a great deep*: and the depth of His justice the evil mind findeth not."[6] But if men will not *know judgment* by doing it, they shall by suffering it.

2. *Who hate the good and love the evil*; i.e. *they* hate, for its own sake, *that* which is good, and love *that* which is evil. The Prophet is not here speaking of their *hating good* men, or *loving evil* men, but of their hating *goodness* and loving *wickedness*.[7] "It is sin not to love good; what guilt to hate it! it is faulty not to flee from evil; what ungodliness to love it!"[6] Man, at first, loves and admires the good, even while he doth it not; he hates the evil, even while he does it, or as soon as he has done it. But man

[1] קצין from קפה, "cut, de*cide*," whence Cadhi.
[2] The word is the same, Isa. i. 10.
[3] Ib. i. 15.
[4] 1 Sam. ii. 12.
[5] Wisd. i. 4.
[6] S. Jer.
[7] This appears from the Kethib רעה.

3 Who also [a] eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them ; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and [b] as flesh within the caldron.

[a] Ps. xiv. 4. [b] Ezek. xi. 3, 7.

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cannot bear to be at strife with his conscience, and so he ends it by excusing himself and telling lies to himself. And then he hates the truth or good with a bitter hatred, because it disturbs the darkness of the false peace with which he would envelop himself. At first, men love only the pleasure connected with the evil ; then they make whom they can, evil, because goodness is a reproach to them : in the end, they love evil for its own sake.[1] Heathen morality, too, distinguished between the incontinent and the unprincipled,[2] the man who sinned under force of temptation, and the man who had lost the sense of right and wrong. "*Every one that doeth evil, hateth the light.*[3] Whoso longeth for things unlawful, hateth the righteousness which rebuketh and punisheth."[4]

Who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones. He had described the Good Shepherd ; now, in contrast, he describes those who ought to be "shepherds of the people," to feed, guard, direct them, but who were their butchers ; who did not shear them, but flayed them ; who fed on them, not fed them. He heaps up their guilt, act by act. First they flay, *i.e.* take away their outer goods ; then they break their bones in pieces, the most solid parts, on which the whole frame of their body depends, to get at the very marrow of their life, and so feed themselves upon them. And not unlike, though still more fearfully, do they sin, who first remove the skin,

[1] Rom. i. 32. [2] The ἀκρατὴς and ἀκόλαστος of Aristotle.
[3] S. John iii. 20. [4] Dion.

4 Then [a] shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from

[a] Ps. xviii. 41; Prov. i. 28; Isa. i. 15; Ezek. viii. 18; Zech. vii. 13.

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as it were, or outward tender fences, of God's graces (such as is modesty, in regard to inward purity; outward demeanour, of inward virtue; outward forms, of inward devotion); and so break the strong bones of the sterner virtues, which hold the whole soul together; and with them the whole flesh, or softer graces, becomes one shapeless mass, shred to pieces and consumed. So Ezekiel says: *Woe to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves; should not the shepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed, ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, &c.*[1]

4. *Then shall they cry unto the Lord. Then.* The Prophet looks on to the Day of the Lord, which is ever before his mind. So the Psalmist, speaking of a time or place not expressed, says, *There were they in great fear.*[2] He sees it, points to it, as seeing what those to whom he spoke saw not, and the more awfully, because he saw, with superhuman and so with certain vision, what was *hid from their eyes.* The *then* was not then, *in the time of grace,* but when the day of grace should be over, and the Day of Judgment should be come. So of that day, when judgment should set in, God says in Jeremiah, *Behold I will bring evil upon them which they shall not be able to go forth of, and they will cry unto Me, and I will not hearken unto them.*[3] And David, *They cried and* there was *none to save; unto the Lord, and He answered them not.*[4] And Solomon, *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he shall cry himself and shall not*

[1] xxxiv. 2–4, add 5–10.
[2] Ps. liii. 5.
[3] xi. 11.
[4] Ps. xviii. 41.

them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

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be heard.[1] And S. James, *He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy.*[2] The prayer is never too late, until judgment comes;[3] the day of grace is over, when the time of judgment has arrived. "They shall cry unto the Lord, and shall not be heard, because they too did not hear those who asked them, and the Lord shall turn His Face from them, because they too turned their face from those who prayed them."

He will even hide His Face. He will not look in mercy on those who would not receive His look of grace. *Your sins*, He says by Isaiah, *have hid His face from you, that He heareth not.* Oh, what will that turning away of the Face be, on which hangs eternity!

As. There is a proportion between the sin and the punishment. *As I have done, so God hath requited me.*[4] *They have behaved themselves ill in their doings*, lit. *have made their deeds evil.* The word rendered *doings* is almost always used in a bad sense, *mighty deeds*, and so deeds with a high hand. Not ignorantly or negligently, nor through human frailty, but with set purpose they applied themselves, not to amend but to *corrupt their doings*, and make them worse. God called to them by *all* His *prophets, make good your doings;*[5] and they, reversing it, used diligence to *make their doings evil.* "All this they shall suffer, because they were not rulers, but tyrants; not Prefects, but lions; not masters of disciples, but wolves of sheep; and they sated themselves with flesh and were fattened, and, as

[1] Prov. xxi. 13. [2] ii. 13. [3] See on Hosea v. 6.

[4] Judges i. 7. "As the Jews speak, 'measure for measure.'" Poc. from Abarb.

[5] Jer. xxxv. 15, היטיבו מעלליכם; here, הרעו מעלליהם.

5 ¶ Thus saith the LORD [a] concerning the prophets that make my people err, that [b] bite with their teeth,

[a] Isa. lvi. 10, 11; Ezek. xiii. 10 and xxii. 25.
[b] Micah ii. 11; Matt. vii. 15.

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sacrifices for the slaughter, were made ready for the punishment of the Lord. Thus far against evil rulers; then he turns to the false prophets and evil teachers, who by flatteries subvert the people of God, promising them the knowledge of His word."[1]

5. *The prophets that make My people err*, flattering them in their sins and rebellions, promising that they shall go unpunished, that God is not so strict, will not put in force the judgments He threatens. So Isaiah saith, *O my people, they which lead thee, mislead thee;*[2] and, *The leaders of this people are its misleaders, and* they that are *led of them are destroyed.*[3] And Jeremiah, *The prophets have seen for thee vanity and folly; and they have not discovered thine iniquity to turn away thy captivity, and have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.*[4] No error is hopeless, save what is taught in the Name of God.

That bite with their mouths. The word [5] is used of no other biting than the biting of serpents. They were doing real, secret evil *while they cry*, i.e. *proclaim peace;* they bit, as serpents, treacherously, deadlily. They fed, not so much on the gifts, for which they hired themselves to *speak peace when* there was *no peace*,[6] as on the souls of the givers. So God says by Ezekiel,[7] *Will ye pollute Me among My people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay*

[1] S. Jer. [2] iii. 12. [3] ix. 16 (15, Heb.). [4] Lam. ii. 14.
[5] נשך Gen. xlix. 17; Num. xxi. 8, 9; Prov. xxiii. 32; Eccl. x. 8, 11; Amos v. 19; ix. 3. Hence, Kimchi, "While they proclaim peace, and flatter the people, it is as if they bit it with the teeth." So A. E. also and Tanch. in Poc.
[6] Ezek. xiii. 10. [7] xiii. 19, 22, 23.

and cry, Peace; and [a] he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him:

[a] Ezek. xiii. 18, 19.

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the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to My people that hear your lies? Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life; therefore ye shall see no more vanity nor divine divinations. It was with a show of peace that Joab slew Abner and Amasa, and with a kiss of peace Judas betrayed our Lord.

And he that putteth not into their mouths, they prepare war against him, lit. *and* (*i.e.* forthwith; it was all one; bribes refused, war proclaimed) *they sanctify war against him.* Like those of whom Joel prophesied,[1] they proclaimed war against him in the Name of God, by the authority of God which they had taken to themselves, speaking in His Name Who had not sent them. So when our Lord fed the multitude, they would *take Him by force and make Him a king;* when their hopes were gone and they saw that His *kingdom was not of this world*, they said, *Crucify Him, crucify Him.* Much more the Pharisees, who, because He rebuked their covetousness, their devouring widows' houses, their extortion and excess, their making their proselytes more children of hell than themselves, said, *Thou blasphemest.* So, when the masters of the possessed damsel whom S. Paul freed, *saw that the hope of their gains was gone*, they accused him, that he *exceedingly troubled their city, teaching customs not lawful to be received.*[2] So Christians were persecuted by the heathen as "hating the human race,"[3]

[1] See on Joel iii. 9.

[2] Acts xvi. 19–21.

[3] Tertullian, Apol. c. x. and note k, Oxf. Tr.

6 [a] Therefore night *shall be* unto you, * that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto

[a] Isa. viii. 20, 22; Ezek. xiii. 23; Zech. xiii. 4.
* Heb. *from a vision.*

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because they would not partake of their sins; as "atheists," [1] because they worshipped not their gods; as "disloyal" [2] and "public enemies," because they joined not in unholy festivals; as "unprofitable," because they neglected things not profitable but harmful. So men are now called "illiberal," who will not make free with the truth of God; "intolerant," who will not allow that all faith is matter of opinion, and that there is no certain truth; "precise," "censorious," who will not connive at sin, or allow the levity which plays, mothlike, around it and jests at it. The Church and the Gospel are against the world, and so the world which they condemn must be against them; and such is the force of truth and holiness, that it must carry on the war against them in their own name.

6. *Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision.* In the presence of God's extreme judgments, even deceivers are at length still; silenced at last by the common misery, if not by awe. The false prophets had promised peace, light, brightness, prosperity; the night of trouble, anguish, darkness, fear, shall come upon them. So shall they no more dare to speak in the Name of God, while He was by His judgments speaking the contrary in a way which all must hear. They abused God's gifts and long-suffering against Himself! they could misinterpret His long-suffering into favour, and they did it: their visions of the future were but the reflections of the present and its continuance; they thought that because God was enduring, He was indifferent, and they took His government out of

[1] Tertullian, Apol. c. xxxv. ad Scap. c. ii. [2] Ib. 42, 43.

you, * that ye shall not divine; [a] and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.

* Heb. *from divining.* [a] Amos viii. 9.

His Hands, and said, that what He appeared to be now, He would ever be. They had no other light, no other foresight. When, then, the darkness of temporal calamity enveloped them, it shrouded in one common darkness of night all present brightness and all sight of the future.

"After Caiaphas had in heart spoken falsehood and a prophecy of blood, although God overruled it to truth which he meant not, all grace of prophecy departed. *The law and the prophets prophesied until John.*[1] *The Sun of Righteousness went down over* them, inwardly and outwardly, withdrawing the brightness of His Providence and the inward light of grace."[2] So Christ Himself forewarned: *Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.*[3] And so it has remained ever since. *The veil has been on their hearts.*[4] The light is in all the world, but they see it not; it arose to lighten *the Gentiles*, but they *walk on still in darkness.* As opposed to holiness, truth, knowledge, Divine enlightening of the mind, bright gladness, contrariwise darkness is falsehood, sin, error, blindness of soul, ignorance of Divine things, and sorrow. In all these ways, did the Sun go down *over them*, so that the darkness weighed heavily *upon them.* So too the inventors of heresies pretend to see and to enter into the mysteries of Christ, yet find darkness instead of light, lose even what they think they see, fail even of what truth they seem most to hold; and they shall be in night and darkness, being *cast into outer darkness; sinning against the brethren,*

[1] S. Matt. xi. 13. [2] Rup.
[3] S. John xii. 35. [4] 2 Cor. iii. 15.

7 Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their * lips; [a] for *there is* no answer of God.

* Heb. *upper lip.* [a] Ps. lxxiv. 9; Amos viii. 11.

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and wounding the weak conscience of those for whom Christ died.[1]

7. *They shall cover their lips,* lit. *the hair of the upper lip.*[2] This was an action enjoined on lepers,[3] and a token of mourning;[4] a token then of sorrow and uncleanness. With their lips they had lied, and now they should cover their lips, as men dumb and ashamed. *For there is no answer of God,* as these deceivers had pretended to have. When all things shall come contrary to what they had promised, it shall be clear that God did not send them. And having plainly no answer of God, they shall not dare to feign one *then.* "Then not even the devils shall receive power to deceive them by their craft. The oracles shall be dumb; the unclean spirit shall not dare to delude."[5] "All this is spoken against those who, in the Church of Christ, flatter the rich, or speak as men-pleasers, out of avarice, ambition, or any like longing for temporal good, to whom that of Isaiah[6] fitteth: *The leaders of this people* [they who profess to *lead* them *aright*] *mislead them, and they that are led of them are destroyed.*"[7]

8. *And truly I* [lit. *contrariwise I*], i.e. whereas they shall be void and *no word in them, I am full of* (or *filled with*) *power by the Spirit of the Lord and of judgment and might.* The false prophets *walked after their own spirit.*[8] Their only power or influence was from without, from favouring circumstances, from adapting themselves to the great or to

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 12. [2] Kim. [3] Lev. xiii. 45.
[4] Ezek. xxiv. 17, 22. [5] S. Jer. [6] iii. 12.
[7] Dion. [8] Ezek. xiii. 3.

8 ¶ But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, [a] to

[a] Isa. lviii. 1.

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the people, going along with the tide, and impelling persons whither they wished to go. The power of the true prophet was inherent, and that by gift of *the Spirit of the Lord*.[1] And so, while adverse circumstances silenced the false prophets, they called forth the more the energy of the true, whose power was from Him in Whose Hands the world is. The adverse circumstances to the false prophets were God's judgments; to the true, they were man's refractoriness, rebellion, oppressiveness. *Now* was the time of the false prophets; *now*, at a distance, they could foretell hardily, because they could not yet be convicted of untruth. When trouble came, they went *into the inner chamber to hide* themselves.[2] Micah, amid *the wild tumult of the people*,[3] was fearless, upborne by Him who controls, *stills*, or looses it, to do His Sovereign Will.

I am filled with power. So our Lord bade His Apostles, *Tarry ye, until ye be endued with power from on high;* [4] *ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;* [5] and *they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*[6] The three gifts, *power*, *judgment*, *might*, are the fruits of the One Spirit of God, through Whom the Prophet was filled with them. Of these, *power* is always strength residing in the person, whether it be the *power* [7] or *might of wisdom* [8] of Almighty God Himself, or *power* which He imparts [9] or

[1] The use of את before רוח יי only, shows plainly that the objects of the verb are גבורה, משפט, כח, and that the את is "with," "through," as in Gen. iv. 1. [2] 1 Kings xxii. 25.
[3] Ps. lxv. 7. [4] S. Luke xxiv. 49. [5] Acts i. 8. [6] Ib. ii. 4.
[7] Exod. xv. 6; xxxii. 11; Num. xiv. 17, &c.
[8] Job xxxvi. 5. [9] Deut. viii. 18; Judges xvi. 5, 9, 19.

declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.

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implants.[1] But it is always power lodged *in* the person, to be put forth by him. Here, as in S. John Baptist [2] or the Apostles,[3] it is Divine power, given through God the Holy Ghost, to accomplish that for which he was sent, as S. Paul was endued with might, *casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*[4] It is just *that*, which is so wanting to human words, which is so characteristic of the word of God, *power*. *Judgment* is, from its form,[5] not so much discernment in the human being, as "the thing judged," pronounced by God, the righteous judgment of God, and righteous judgment in man conformably therewith.[6] It was what, he goes on to say, the great men of his people *abhorred*,[7] equity. With this he was filled. This was the substance of his message, right judgment to be enacted by them, to which he was to exhort them, or which, on their refusal, was to be pronounced upon them in the Name of God the Judge of all, and to be executed upon them. *Might* is courage or boldness to deliver the message of God, not awed or hindered by any adversaries. It is that holy courage, of which S. Paul speaks, *that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*[8] So too, after the Apostles had been *straitly threatened that they should speak no more in the Name of Jesus, all*, having prayed, *were filled with the Holy Ghost*, and spake *the word of*

[1] Deut. viii. 17, and passim.
[2] S. Luke i. 17.
[3] S. Luke xxiv. 49.
[4] 2 Cor. x. 5.
[5] משפט
[6] As in Prov. i. 3; Isa. i. 21; v. 7.
[7] ver. 9.
[8] Eph. vi. 19, 20.

9 Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house

God with boldness.[1] "Whoso is strengthened and arrayed, uttereth fiery words, whereby hearers' hearts are moved and changed. But whoso speaketh of his own mind, doth good neither to himself nor others."[2]

So then, of the three gifts, *power* expresses the Divine might lodged in him; *judgment* the substance of what he had to deliver; *might* or *courage*, the strength to deliver it in face of human power, persecution, ridicule, death.

"These gifts the Prophets know are not their own, but are from the Spirit of God, and are by Him inspired into them. Such was the spirit of Elijah, unconquered, energetic, fiery, of whom it is said, *Then stood up Elias as fire, and his sword burned like a lamp.*[3] Such was Isaiah: *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins.*[4] Such was Jeremiah: *Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary of holding in. I have set thee for a trier among My people, a strong fort; and thou shalt know and try their ways.*[5] Such was John Baptist, who said, *O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*[6] Such was Paul, who, when he *reasoned of temperance, righteousness and judgment to come,*[7] made Felix tremble, though unbelieving and ungodly. Such were the Apostles, who, when they had received the Holy Spirit, *brake*, with a mighty breath, *ships* and kings *of Tarshish.*[8] Such will be Elias and Enoch at the end of the world, striving against Antichrist, of whom it is said, [9] *If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies.*"[10]

9. *Hear this, I pray you.* The Prophet discharges upon

[1] Acts iv. 18, 31. [2] Dion. [3] Ecclus. xlviii. 1. [4] lviii. 1.
[5] vi. 11, 27. [6] S. Matt. iii. 7. [7] Acts xxiv. 25.
[8] Ps. xlviii. 8. [9] Rev. xi. 5. [10] Lap.

of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity.

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them that *judgment*, whereof, *by the Spirit of God*, he was *full*, and which they *abhorred ; judgment* against their perversion of judgment. He rebukes the same classes as before,[1] *the heads* and *judges*, yet still more sternly. They *abhorred judgment*, he says, as a thing loathsome and *abominable*,[2] such as men cannot bear even to look upon ; they not only dealt wrongly, but they *perverted*, distorted, *all equity :* "that so there should not remain even some slight justice in the city."[3] *All equity ;* all of every sort, right, rectitude, uprightness, straight-forwardness,[4] whatever was right by natural conscience or by God's law, they distorted, like the sophists making the worse appear the better cause. Naked violence crushes the individual ; perversion of equity destroys the fountain-head of justice. The Prophet turns from them in these words, as one who could not bear to look upon their misdeeds, and who would not speak to them ; *they pervert ; building ; her heads, her priests, her prophets ;* as Elisha, but for the presence of Jehoshaphat, would not look on Jehoram, nor see him.[5] He first turns and speaks of them, as one man, as if they were all one in evil.

[1] iii. 1.

[2] מתעבים, one of the two strongest Hebrew words to express abomination ; comp. תועבה. [3] S. Jer.

[4] Frequent as the adj. ישר, "right, upright," is, the abstract ישרה occurs here only in the O. T. The original force is "straight," "even," and hence "straight-forwardness, rectitude." The idea of "evenness" (which Ges. denies) belonged to the root in early times, the names of the two "plains," *Sharon* and *Mishor* in Reuben (Deut. iii. 10 ; iv. 43), being formed from it.

[5] 2 Kings iii. 14.

10 [a] They build up Zion with * blood,[b] and Jerusalem with iniquity.

[a] Jer. xxii. 13. * Heb. *bloods.*
[b] Ezek. xxii. 27; Hab. ii. 12; Zeph. iii. 3.

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10. *They build up* [lit. *building, sing.*] *Zion with blood.* This may be taken literally on both sides, that the rich built their palaces "with wealth gotten by bloodshed,[1] by rapine of the poor, by slaughter of the saints," as Ezekiel says, *Her princes in the midst thereof* are *like wolves, to shed blood, to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.*[2] Or by *blood* he may mean that they indirectly took away life, in that, through wrong judgments, extortion, usury, fraud, oppression, reducing wages or detaining them, they took away what was necessary to support life. So it is said: *The bread of the needy is their life, he that defraudeth him thereof is a man of blood. He that taketh away his neighbour's living slayeth him, and he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire is a bloodshedder.*[3] Or it may be, that as David prayed to God, *Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem,*[4] asking Him thereby to maintain or increase its well-being, so these men thought to promote the temporal prosperity of Jerusalem by doings which were unjust, oppressive, crushing to their inferiors. So Solomon, in his degenerate days, made the *yoke* upon his people and his *service grievous.*[5] So ambitious monarchs by large standing armies or filling their exchequers drain the life-blood of their people. The physical condition and stature of the poorer population in much of France was lowered permanently by the conscriptions under the first Emperor. In our wealthy nation, the term poverty describes a condition of other days. We have had to coin a new name to designate the misery, offspring of our material

[1] S. Jer. [2] xxii. 27. [3] Ecclus. xxxiv. 21, 22.
[4] Ps. li. 18. [5] 1 Kings xii. 4.

prosperity. From our wealthy towns (as from those of Flanders) ascends to heaven against us "the cry of 'pauperism,' *i.e.* the cry of distress, arrived at a condition of system and of power, and, by an unexpected curse, issuing from the very development of wealth. The political economy of unbelief has been crushed by facts on all the theatres of human activity and industry."[1] Truly we *build up Zion with blood*, when we cheapen luxuries and comforts at the price of souls, use Christian toil like brute strength, tempt men to dishonesty and women to other sin, to eke out the scanty wages which alone our selfish thirst for cheapness allows, heedless of everything save of our individual gratification, or the commercial prosperity which we have made our god. Most awfully was *Zion built with blood*, when the Jews shed the innocent Blood that *the Romans* might not *take away* their *place and nation*.[2] But since He has said, *Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it not unto Me*,[3] and, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?*[4] when Saul was persecuting Christ's members, then, in this waste of lives and of souls, we are not only wasting the Price of His Blood in ourselves and others, but are anew slaying Christ, and that from the self-same motives as those who crucified Him. *When ye sin against the members, ye sin against Christ.*[5] Our commercial greatness is *the price of* His *Blood*.[6] In the judgments on the Jews, we may read our own national future; in the woe on those through whom *the weak brother perishes for whom Christ died*,[7] we, if we partake or connive at it, may read our own.

11. *The heads thereof judge for reward.* Every class was

[1] Lacordaire, Conférences, T. ii. p. 300.
[2] S. John xi. 48.
[3] S. Matt. xxv. 45.
[4] Acts ix. 4.
[5] 1 Cor. viii. 12.
[6] S. Matt. xxvii. 6.
[7] 1 Cor. viii. 11.

11 [a] The heads thereof judge for reward, and [b] the

[a] Isa. i. 23; Ezek. xxii. 12; Hosea iv. 18; Micah vii. 3.
[b] Jer. vi. 13.

corrupted. One sin, *the root of all evil*,[1] covetousness, entered into all they did. It, not God, was their one end, and so their god. *Her heads*, the secular authority, who *sat to judge according to the law*,[2] *judged*, contrary to the law, *for rewards*. They sat as the representatives of the Majesty of God, in Whose Name they judged, Whose righteous judgment and correcting Providence law exhibits and executes, and they profaned it. To *judge for rewards* was in itself sin, forbidden by the law.[3] To refuse justice, unless paid for it, was unjust, degrading to justice. The second sin followed hard upon it, to judge unjustly, absolving the guilty, condemning the innocent, justifying the oppressor, legalising wrong.

And her priests teach for hire. The Lord was *the portion and inheritance*[4] of the priest. He had his sustenance assigned him by God, and, therewith, the duty to *put difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean, and to teach all the statutes*,[5] which God had commanded. Their *lips* were to *keep knowledge*.[6] This then, which they were bound to *give*, they sold. But "whereas it is said to the holy, *Freely ye have received, freely give*,[7] these, producing the answer of God upon the receipt of money, sold the grace of the Lord for a covetous price."[8] Probably too, their sin co-operated with and strengthened the sin of the judges. Authorised interpreters of the law, they, to please the wealthy, probably misinterpreted the

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 10. [2] Acts xxiii. 3.
[3] Exod. xxiii. 8; Deut. xvi. 19.
[4] Num. xviii. 20; Deut. xviii. 2.
[5] Lev. x. 10, 11; add Deut. xvii. 10, 11; xxxiii. 10; Hag. ii. 11 sqq. [6] Mal. ii. 7. [7] S. Matt. x. 8. [8] S. Jer.

priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets

law. For wicked judges would not have given a price for a righteous interpretation of the law. The civil authorities were entrusted by God with power to execute the law ; the priests were entrusted by Him with the knowledge to expound it. Both employed in its perversion that which God gave them for its maintenance. The princes obtained by bribery the misjudgment of the priests and enforced it; the priests justified the injustice of the princes. So Arian Bishops, themselves hirelings,[1] by false expositions of Scripture, countenanced Arian Emperors in the oppression of the faithful. "They propped up the heresy by human patronage;"[2] the Emperors "bestowed on"[3] them their "reign of irreligion." The Arian Emperors tried to efface the Council of Nice by Councils of Arian Bishops.[4] Emperors perverted their power, the Bishops their knowledge. Not publicly only but privately doubtless also, these *priests taught* falsely *for hire*, lulling the consciences of those who wished to deceive themselves as to what God forbade, and to obtain from His priests answers in His Name, which might explain away His law in favour of laxity or sin. So people now try to get ill-advised to do against God's will what they are bent on doing ; only they get ill-advised for nothing. One who receives money for giving an irresponsible opinion, places himself in proximate peril of giving the answer which will please those who pay him. "It is Simony to teach and preach the doctrine of Christ and His Gospel, or to give answers to quiet the conscience, for money. For the immediate object of these two acts is the calling forth of faith, hope, charity, penitence, and other supernatural acts, and the reception of the consolation of

[1] S. Ath. ag. Arians, i. 8, p. 191, and n. c. Oxf. Tr.
[2] Id. ii. 43, p. 341. [3] Counc. Arim. § 3, p. 77.
[4] Pusey's Councils of the Church, pp. 118–180, &c.

thereof divine for money : [a] yet will they lean upon

[a] Isa. xlviii. 2 ; Jer. vii. 4 ; Rom. ii. 17.

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the Holy Spirit; and this is, among Christians, their only value. Whence they are accounted things sacred and supernatural ; for their immediate end is to things supernatural ; and they are done by man, as he is an instrument of the Holy Ghost."[1]

"Thou art permitted, O Priest, *to live*,[2] not to luxuriate, from the altar. *The mouth of the ox which treadeth out the corn* is *not muzzled*.[3] Yet the Apostle *abused not the liberty*,[4] but *having food and raiment*, was *therewith content* ;[5] *labouring night and day, that he might not be chargeable to anybody*.[6] And in his Epistles he calls God to witness that he *lived holily and*[7] without avarice in the Gospel of Christ. He asserts this too, not of himself alone but of his disciples, that he had sent no one who would either ask or receive anything from the Churches.[8] But if in some Epistles he expresses pleasure, and calls the gifts of those who sent the *grace*[9] *of God*, he gathers not for himself but for the *poor saints at Jerusalem*.[10] But these *poor saints* were they who of the Jews first believed in Christ, and, being cast out by parents, kinsmen, connections, had lost their possessions and all their goods, the priests of the temple and the people destroying them. Let such poor receive. But if on plea of the poor a few houses are enriched, and we eat in gold, glass, and china, let us either with our wealth change our habit, or let not the habit of poverty seek the riches of Senators. What avails the habit of poverty, while a whole crowd of poor longs for the contents of our purse?

[1] Less. de Justit. ii. 35, de Simonia Dub. 13, p. 389, L.
[2] 1 Cor. ix. 13.
[3] Ib. ix. 9.
[4] Ib. ix. 18.
[5] 1 Tim. vi. 8.
[6] 1 Thess. ii. 6 ; 2 Thess. iii. 8.
[7] 1 Thess. ii. 10.
[8] 2 Cor. xii. 17, 18.
[9] Ib. viii. 6, 7.
[10] Rom. xv. 26.

Wherefore, *for our sake* who are such, *who build up Zion with blood and Jerusalem by iniquity, who judge for gifts, give answers for rewards, divine for money*, and thereon, claiming to ourselves a fictitious sanctity, say, *Evil will not come upon us*, hear we the sentence of the Lord which follows. *Sion and Jerusalem and the mountain of the temple*, i.e. the temple of Christ, *shall*, in the consummation and the end, when *love shall wax cold*[1] and the faith shall be rare,[2] *be plowed as a field and become heaps as the high places of a forest;* so that, where once were ample houses and countless heaps of corn, there should only be a poor cottage, keeping up the show of fruit which has no refreshment for the soul."[3]

The three places, Zion, Jerusalem, the Temple, describe the whole city in its political and religious aspects. Locally, Mount Zion, which occupies the south-west, "had upon it the upper city," and "was by much the loftier, and lengthways the straighter." Jerusalem, as contrasted with Zion, represented the lower city, "supported"[4] on the east by Mount Acra, and including the valley of Tyropœon. South of Mount Acra and lower than it, at the south-eastern corner of the city, lay Mount Moriah or the Mount of the Lord's House, separated at this time from Mount Acra by a deep ravine, which was filled up by the Asmonæan princes, who lowered Mount Acra. It was joined to the NE. corner of Mount Zion by the causeway of Solomon across the Tyropœon. The whole city, then, in all its parts was to be desolated.

And her prophets divine for money. The word rendered *divine*,[5] is always used in a bad sense. These prophets, then, were false prophets, *her prophets* and not God's, which

[1] S. Matt. xxiv. 12.
[2] S. Luke xviii. 8.
[3] S. Jer.
[4] Jos. B. J. v. 4, 1.

[5] In Prov. xvi. 10 (quoted as an exception) it is used of that penetrating acuteness which is like a gift of divination; as we speak of "divining a person's thoughts, purposes," &c.

the LORD, * and say, *Is* not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.

* Heb. *saying.*

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divined, in reality or appearance, giving the answer which their employers, the rich men, wanted, as if it were an answer from God. [1] Yet they also *judge for rewards*, who look rather to the earthly than to the spiritual good; they *teach for hire*, who seek in the first place the things of this world, instead of teaching for the glory of God and the good of souls, and regarding earthly things in the second place only, as the support of life.

And say, Is not the Lord among us? And after all this, not understanding their sin, as though by their guilt they purchased the love of God, they said in their impenitence that they were judges, prophets, priests, of God. *They do all this*, and yet *lean on the Lord;* they stay and trust, not in themselves, but in God; good in itself, had not they been evil! *And say, Is not the Lord among us? none evil can* [*shall*] *come upon us.* So Jeremiah says, *Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord. The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord are these.*[2] "He called them *lying words*, as being ofttimes repeated by the false prophets to entice the credulous people to a false security"[3] against the threatenings of God. As though God could not forsake His own people, nor cast away Zion which He had *chosen for an habitation for Himself*, nor profane His own holy place! Yet it was true that God *was among them*, in the midst of them, as our Lord was among the Jews, though they knew Him not. Yet if not in the midst of His people so as to hallow, God is in the midst of them to punish. But what else do we than these Jews did, if we lean on the Apostolic line, the possession of Holy Scripture,

[1] From Dion. [2] vii. 4. [3] Sanch.

12 Therefore shall Zion for your sake be [a] plowed

[a] Jer. xxvi. 18; Micah i. 6.

Sacraments, pure doctrine, without setting ourselves to gain to God the souls of our heathen population? or what else is it for a soul to trust in having been made a member of Christ, or in any gifts of God, unless it be *bringing forth fruit with patience?* "Learn we too hence, that all trust in the merits of Christ is vain, so long as any wilfully persist in sin." [1] "Know we, that God will be in us also, if we have not faith alone, nor on this account rest, as it were, on Him, but if to faith there be added also the excelling in good works. For *faith without works is dead.* But when with the riches of faith works concur, then will God indeed be with us, and will strengthen us mightily, and account us friends, and gladden us as His true sons, and free us from all evil." [1]

12. *Therefore shall Zion for your sake* [*for your sake shall Zion*] *be plowed as a field.* They thought to be its builders; they were its destroyers. They imagined to advance or secure its temporal prosperity *by bloods;* they (as men ever do first or last) ruined it. Zion might have stood, but for these its acute, far-sighted politicians, who scorned the warnings of the prophets, as well-meant ignorance of the world or of the necessities of the state. They taught, perhaps they thought, that *for Zion's sake* they (act as they might) were secure. Practical Antinomians! God says, that, *for their sake,* Zion, defiled by their deeds, should be destroyed. The fulfilment of the prophecy was delayed by the repentance under Hezekiah. *Did he not,* the elders ask, *fear the Lord and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented Him of the evil which He had pronounced against them?* [2] But the prophecy remained, like that of Jonah

[1] J. H. Mich. [2] Jer. xxvi. 19.

as a field, [a] and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and

[a] Ps. lxxix. 1.

against Nineveh, and, when man undid and in act repented of his repentance, it found its fulfilment.

Jerusalem shall become heaps [lit. *of ruins* [1]], and *the mountain of the house*, Mount Moriah, on which the *house of God* stood, *as the high places of the forest*, lit. *as high places of a forest*. It should return wholly to what it had been, before Abraham offered up the typical sacrifice of his son, a wild and desolate place covered with tangled *thickets*.[2]

The prophecy had a first fulfilment at its first capture by Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah mourns over it: *Because of the mountain of Zion which is desolate, foxes walk* [habitually [3]] upon it.[4] Nehemiah said, *Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem* lieth *waste*;[5] and Sanballat mocked at the attempts to rebuild it, as a thing impossible: *Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of dust, and these too, burned?*[6] and the builders complained: *The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed* [lit. *sinketh* under them], *and there is much dust, and we are not able to build the wall.*[7] In the desolation under Antiochus again it is related: *They saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned, and the gates burned up, and shrubs growing in the courts, as in a forest or in one of the mountains.*[8] When, by the shedding of the Blood of the Lord, they *filled up the measure* of their *fathers*,[9] and called the curse upon themselves, *His Blood be upon us and upon our children*,[10] destruction came upon them to the uttermost. With the exception of three towers, left to exhibit the greatness of Roman prowess in destroying such

[1] עִיִּין from עוה, "distort, pervert, subvert."
[2] Gen. xxii. 13, סְבַךְ. [3] הִלְכוּ [4] Lam. v. 18.
[5] Neh. ii. 17. [6] Ib. iv. 2 [iii. 34, Heb.].
[7] Ib. 10 [iv. 4, Heb.]. [8] 1 Macc. iv. 38.
[9] S. Matt. xxiii. 32. [10] Ib. xxvii. 25.

and so strong a city, they "so levelled to the ground the whole circuit of the city, that to a stranger it presented no token of ever having been inhabited."[1] He "*effaced* the rest of the city," says the Jewish historian, himself an eye-witness.[2] The elder Pliny soon after, A.D. 77, speaks of it as a city which *had been* and was not. "Where *was* Jerusalem, far the most renowned city, not of Judæa only, but of the East,"[3] "a funeral pile."[4] With this corresponds S. Jerome's statement, "Relics of the city remained for fifty years until the Emperor Hadrian."[5] Still it was in utter ruins.[6] The toleration of the Jewish school at Jamnia[7] the more illustrates the desolation of Jerusalem where there was none. The Talmud[8] relates how R. Akiba smiled when others wept at seeing a fox coming out of the Holy of holies. This prophecy of Micah being fulfilled, he looked the more for the prophecy of good things to come, connected therewith. Not Jerusalem only, but well-nigh all

[1] Joseph. B. J., vii. 1, 1. [2] Ib. vi. 9, 1.

[3] Nat. Hist. v. 14.

[4] Pliny says of Engedi, "Below these was the town Engadda, second only to Jerusalem in fertility and palm-groves, now a second funeral pile" [bustum]. N. H. v. 18. See at length in Deyling de Æliæ Capit. Orig. in his Obss. sacr. v. 436–490, and on the whole subject Lightfoot, Chronicon de Excidio urb. Hieros. Opp. ii. 136 sqq., Tillemont, Hist. d. Emp. T. i. Ruine des Juifs; T. ii. Révoltes des Juifs; Munter, d. Jud. Krieg unt. Traj. u. Hadr. (translated in Dr. Robinson's Bibl. Sacr. T. iii. 1st series), who, however, gives too much weight to very late authorities; Jost, Gesch. d. Juden, B. xii. [5] Ep. 129, ad Dard. fin.

[6] The Talmud speaks of R. Jose (who lived before Hadrian) "praying in one of the ruins of Jerusalem," but only when on a journey. Berachoth, f. 3. The context implies that they were utter ruins.

[7] Gittin, f. 56, Jost, iii. 184, Anhang, p. 165.

[8] Maccoth, fin.

[a] the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

[a] Micah iv. 2.

Judæa was desolated by that war, in which a million and a half perished,[1] besides all who were sold as slaves. "Their country to which you would expel them, is destroyed, and there is no place to receive them," was Titus' expostulation[2] to the Antiochenes, who desired to be rid of the Jews their fellow-citizens. A heathen historian relates how, before the destruction by Hadrian, "many wolves and hyænas entered their cities howling."[3] Titus however having left above 6000[4] Roman soldiers on the spot, a civil population was required to minister to their wants. The Christians who, following our Lord's warning, had fled to Pella,[5] returned to Jerusalem,[6] and continued there until the second destruction by Hadrian, under fifteen successive Bishops.[7] Some few Jews had been left there;[8] some very probably

[1] Josephus' numbers.

[2] Jos. B. J. viii. 5, 2. [3] Dio. lxix. 14.

[4] "The tenth legion and some troops of horse and companies of foot" (Jos. Ib. vii. 1, 2). The legion was 6000 men; the troop, 64; the company, 100.

[5] Eus. H. E. iii. 5.

[6] S. Epiph. de Mens. c. 15, p. 171.

[7] Eus. H. E. iv. 5, "from written documents."

[8] Josephus makes Eleazar say in the siege of Masada, "Jerusalem has been plucked up by the roots, and the only memorial of it remaining is the camp of those who took it, still seated on its remains. Hapless elders sit by the dust of the temple, and a few women preserved by the enemy for the foulest insolence." B. J. vii. 8. The statement of S. Epiphanius (de Mens. 15, p. 170), "in that part of Zion which survived after the desolation, there were both parts of dwellings around Zion itself and seven synagogues which alone stood in Zion as cabins, one of which survived till the

returned, since we hear of no prohibition from the Romans until after the fanatic revolt under Barcocheba. But the fact that when towards the close of Trajan's reign they burst out simultaneously, in one wild frenzy,[1] upon the surrounding heathen, all along the coast of Africa, Libya, Cyrene, Egypt, the Thebais, Mesopotamia, Cyprus,[2] there was no insurrection in Judæa, implies that there were no great numbers of Jews there. Judæa, aforetime the centre of rebellion, contributed nothing[3] to that wide national insurrection, in which the carnage was so terrible, as though it had been one convulsive effort of the Jews to root out their enemies.[4] Even in the subsequent war

time of Bishop Maximus and the Emperor Constantine, as a hut in a vineyard," is remarkably confirmed by the independent Latin statement of the Bordeaux pilgrim. "Within the wall of Zion appears the place where David had his palace; and of seven synagogues which were there, one only has remained, the rest are ploughed and sowed." Itin. Hieros. p. 592, ed. Wess. Optatus also mentions the seven synagogues (iii. 2 Edd. before Dupin, and all MSS. but one; see p. 53). Before the destruction there are said to have been 480. Echa Rabbathi, f. 52, col. 2, f. 71, col. 4.

[1] Sub uno tempore, quasi rabie efferati. Oros. L. vii. B. P. vi. 437. "As if rekindled by some dreadful seditious spirit." Eus. H. E. iv. 2.

[2] Oros. Dio mentions Cyrene, Egypt, Cyprus; to these Eusebius adds Mesopotamia; also in S. Jer. Chron. A.D. 117.

[3] Abulfaraj (A.D. 1270) mentions an *invasion* of Judæa by one whom the Egyptian Jews made their king; and whom "the Roman armies sought and slew with some ten thousands of Jews everywhere" (Hist. Ar. p. 120; Chron. Syr. p. 56). He is too late to be an authority; but his account equally implies that there was no rebellion *in* Judæa.

[4] Dio speaks of their destroying 220,000 Romans and Greeks in Cyrene; committing much the same horrors in Egypt; destroying 240,000 in Cyprus (lxviii. 32). The Jews, ascribing this to Barcocheba, say that they destroyed "in

under Hadrian, Orosius speaks of them as "laying waste the province of Palestine, *once their own*," [1] as though they had gained possession of it from without, not by insurrection within it. The Jews assert that in the time of Joshua Ben Chananiah (under Trajan) "the kingdom of wickedness decreed that the temple should be rebuilt." [2] If this was so, the massacres towards the end of Trajan's reign altered the policy of the Empire. Apparently the Emperors attempted to extinguish the Jewish, as, at other times, the Christian faith. A heathen author mentions the prohibition of circumcision.[3] The Jerusalem Talmud [4] speaks of many who for fear *became uncircumcised*, and renewed the symbol of their faith "when Bar Cozibah got the better, so as to reign $2\frac{1}{2}$ years among them." [5] The Jews add that the prohibition extended to the keeping of the Sabbath and the reading of the law.[6] Hadrian's city, Ælia, was doubtless intended, not only for a strong posi-

Africa a great multitude of Romans and Greeks like the sand on the seashore innumerable," and in Egypt more than 200,000 men; and in Cyprus, so as to leave none. Zemach David, f. 27, 1, in Eisenmenger, Entd. Jud. ii. 655. (The coincidence is remarkable, but the statement is too late to have any independent value.) Orosius says that "Libya was so desolated through the slaughter of its peasants, that, had not Hadrian re-colonised it, it would have remained empty" (l.c.).

[1] l.c. Sulpicius Severus in like way speaks of the Jews "wishing to rebel, essaying to plunder Syria and Palestine" (ii. 4).

[2] Bereshith Rabba, c. 64.

[3] Spartian Hadrian, c. 14. It was repealed by Antonine. See Munter, § 26.

[4] Yebammoth, f. 9, 1, and R. Nissim. (See in Lightfoot, Chron. Opp. ii. 143.) Berachoth, f. 16, 2, in Jost. B. xii. Anhang n. 21.

[5] R. Nissim in Lightfoot, l.c. [6] Jost. xii. 9, p. 228.

tion, but also to efface the memory of Jerusalem by the Roman and heathen city which was to replace it. Christians, when persecuted, suffered ; Jews rebelled. The recognition of Barcocheba, who gave himself out as the Messiah,[1] by Akibah[2] and "all the wise [Jews] of his generation,"[3] made the war national. Palestine was the chief seat of the war, but not its source. The Jews throughout the Roman world were in arms against their conquerors ;[4] and the number of fortresses and villages which they got possession of, and which were destroyed by

[1] Eus. H. E. iv. 6. Zemach David, f. 27, in Eisenmenger, Entd. Jud. ii. 654. "He was called Bar Cocheba, because he interpreted, as said of himself, *a star shall arise out of Jacob, &c.*" (Num. xxiv. 17). Shalshalet hakkabbala (in De Voisin on Martini, Pug. Fid. p. 265) ; Sandedrin, Chelek (Mart. p. 320).

[2] "And R. Akibah himself, when he saw him, said of him, This is the king Messiah, as it is in the Echa Rabbathi on the verse Lam. ii. 2" (Ib.). "He applied Hagg. ii. 6, 7, to him" (quoting v. 7, "*I will bring the desire of the nations to Jerusalem*"), Sanh. Chelek in Mart. See more of him, Wolf, Bibl. Hebr. i. n. 1801. R. Bechai said, God revealed to him things unknown to Moses (Ib.). See also Midrash Cant. in Mart. p. 320 ; Bartolocci, Bibl. Rabb. p. 274.

[3] Maimon. Yad Chazaka, Sanhedrin, c. 11, in Mart. p. 873. "R. Akiba and all the wise of his generation thought that he was the Messiah, until he was slain in his iniquities, and it was known that he was not." This was doubtless the ground of their death, mentioned in the Avoda Zara. See p. 128 sqq., F. C. Ewald, trans.

[4] "The Romans made no account of them at first, but when all Judæa was moved and all the Jews throughout the world were set in commotion and conspired and publicly and privately inflicted much evil on the Romans, and many foreigners helped them in hope of gain, and the whole world was shaken, Hadrian sent his best general against them." Dio. Cass. lxix. 13.

the Romans,[1] shows that their successes were far beyond Judæa. Their measures in Judæa attest the desolate condition of the country. They fortified, not towns, but "the advantageous positions of the country, strengthened them with mines and walls, that, if defeated, they might have places of refuge, and communication among themselves underground unperceived."[2] For two years (as appears from the coins struck by Barcocheba[3]) they had possession of Jerusalem. It was essential to his claim to be a temporal Messiah. They proposed, at least, to "rebuild their temple"[4] and restore their polity." But they could not fortify Jerusalem. Its siege is just named;[5] but the one place which obstinately resisted the Romans was a strong city *near*

[1] "Fifty fortresses of much account and 985 very well-known villages." Dio. C. (almost a contemporary), Ib. 14.

[2] Ib. 12.

[3] De Saulcy, Numismatique Judaique, pp. 156–170. The coins bear the inscription "the first year of the redemption of Jerusalem," "the first" and "second year of the freedom of Jerusalem." Two of them are cast upon coins of Trajan and Vespasian. Ib. p. 162. The Abbe Barthélémi (App. to Bayer Num. Hebr. Sam. Vind. L. iii. p. ix.–xi.) mentions four of Trajan's, recast by Barcocheba. Bayer mentions coins of the third and fourth year, but anonymous (Num. Hebr. Sam. p. 171). De Saulcy supposes these to belong to the revolt against Vespasian (pp. 153, 154). The title and the name "Simon" which probably Barcocheba took, were doubtless intended to recall the memory of the Maccabees. The Jerusalem Talmud speaks of money with the impress of Ben Coziba ("son of a lie" as the Jews changed his name). Lightfoot, Opp. ii. 143. Mr. Vaux, keeper of the coins, British Museum, tells me that these coins (of which some are in the British Museum) are certainly genuine. See also Madden, pp. 161–182.

[4] S. Chrys. adv. Jud. v. 10. He does not apparently mean that they actually began it.

[5] Eus. Dem. Ev. ii. 38; vi. 18. The Samaritan Chronicle (c. 47, ed. Juynboll) gives an account of a siege by Adrian

Jerusalem,[1] known before only as a deeply indented mountain tract, Bether.[2] Probably it was one of the strong positions, fortified in haste, at the beginning of the war.

The Jews fulfilled our Lord's words, *I am come in My Father's Name and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.*[3] Their first destruction was the punishment of their Deicide, the crucifixion of Jesus, the Christ; their second they brought upon themselves by accepting a false Christ, a robber[4] and juggler.[5] "580,000 are said to have perished in battle,"[6] besides "an incalculable number by famine and fire, so that all Judæa was made well-nigh a desert." The Jews say that "no olives remained in Palestine."[7] Hadrian "destroyed it,"[8] making it "an utter desolation"[9] and

in which it mixes up fables and facts belonging to the siege of Titus (which it omits), but I do not see any traces of traditional fact.

[1] Eus. H. E. iv. 6.

[2] The Rev. G. Williams (Holy City, i. 209–213) has at once identified *Bether* with the name *the mountains of Bether* (Cant. ii. 17), and ruins, "khirbet el yehûd" (ruins of the Jews), near the village still called Bittir near Jerusalem. (See Robinson's or Kiepert's map.) There are traces both of fortifications and excavations, such as Dio speaks of. *Bether* as well as *Bithron* beyond Jordan (2 Sam. ii. 29) had their name from deep *incisions*. (See the use of בָּתַר, בְּתֶר, בֶּתֶר, Gen. xv. 10.)

[3] S. John v. 43.

[4] "Given to murder and robbery." Eus. H. E. iv. 6. See Maimonides (above, p. 139, n. 3).

[5] S. Jer. Apol. 2, c. Ruf. § 31. He pretended to breathe fire, a trick ascribed by Florus iii. 19, to Eunus, author of the Servile War in Sicily. Vallars.

[6] Dio, l.c. [7] Talm. Jerus. Pea 7 in Lightfoot, l.c.

[8] Appian de reb. Syr. 50. "Jerusalem, which Ptolemy, king of Egypt, first destroyed; then, when rebuilt, Vespasian razed to the ground, and again Hadrian, in my time."

[9] S. Chrys. l.c. § 11.

"effacing all remains of it." "We read,"[1] says St. Jerome,[2] "the expedition of Ælius Hadrianus against the Jews, who so destroyed Jerusalem and its walls, as, from the fragments and ashes of the city to build a city, named from himself, Ælia." At this time[3] there appears to have been a formal act, whereby the Romans marked the legal annihilation of cities; an act esteemed, at this time, one of most extreme severity.[4] When a city was to be built, its compass was marked with a plough; the Romans, where they willed to unmake a city, did, on rare occasions, turn up its soil with the plough. Hence the saying, "A city with a plough is built, with a plough overthrown."[5] The city so ploughed forfeited all civil rights;[6] it was counted to have ceased to be. The symbolical act under Hadrian appears to have been directed against both the civil and religious existence of their city, since the revolts of the Jews were mixed up with their religious hopes. The Jews relate that both the city generally, and the Temple, were ploughed. The ploughing of the city was the last of

[1] S. Jerome then took this statement from written history.

[2] In Joel i. 4.

[3] The Mishnah places it after the capture of Bether. "On the 9th of Ab, it was decreed against our fathers, that they should not enter the land; and the Temple was laid desolate the first and second time; and Bether was taken; and the city was ploughed." Taanith, c. 5, § 6; Mishna, ii. p. 382, ed. Surenhus. Rashi regards this as a fulfilment of Jer. xxvi. 18, and of this place. Ib. p. 383, col. 2. Buxtorf quotes also Yotseroth (Jewish hymns), c. Comm. f. 35, 1, for the fact. Lex. Rabb. p. 916.

[4] Seneca de clem. i. 26, Deyl. [5] Isidor. lxxv. 1, &c.

[6] "If the usufruct [annual produce] be left to a city, and the plough be passed over it (as befell Carthage), it ceases to be a city, and so by a sort of death it ceases to have the usufruct." Modestinus in l. Si usus fructus 21, ff, quibus modis usus fructus amittatur, L.

those mournful memories, which made the month Ab a time of sorrow. But the ploughing of the temple is also especially recorded. S. Jerome says, "In this [the fifth month] was the Temple at Jerusalem burnt and destroyed, both by Nebuchadnezzar, and many years afterwards by Titus and Vespasian; the city Bether, whither thousands of Jews had fled, was taken; the Temple was ploughed, as an insult to the conquered race, by Titus Annius Rufus."[1] The Gemara says, "When Turnus [or it may be "when Tyrant] Rufus ploughed the porch" [of the temple].[2] Perhaps Hadrian meant thus to declare the desecration of the site of the Temple, and so to make way for the further desecration by his temple of Jupiter. He would declare the worship of God at an end. The horrible desecration of placing the temple of Ashtaroth over the Holy Sepulchre[3] was probably a part of the same policy, to make the Holy City utterly heathen. The "Capitoline"[4] was part of its new name in honour of the Jupiter of the Roman Capitol. Hadrian intended, not to rebuild Jerusalem, but to build a new city under his own name. "The city being thus bared of the Jewish nation, and its old inhabitants having been utterly destroyed, and an alien race settled there, the Roman city which afterwards arose, having changed its name, is called Ælia in honour of the Emperor Ælius Hadrianus."[5] It was a Roman colony,[4] with Roman temples, Roman amphitheatres. Idolatry was stamped on its coins.[6]

[1] On Zech. viii. 16, 17. S. Jerome has the same order as the Talmud.

[2] Taanith, l.c. The Jerusalem Talmud has "the temple" for "the porch."

[3] Eus. Vit. Const. iii. 26; Socr. i. 17; Soz. ii. 1; S. Jer. Ep. 58, ad Paul, § 3.

[4] Col. Æl. Capitol, i.e. Colonia Ælia Capitolina.

[5] Eus. H. E. iv. 6.

[6] See Roman coins in De Saulcy, pp. 171–187, from Hadrian, A.D. 136, to Hostilian, A.D. 250.

Hadrian excluded from it, on the north, almost the whole of Bezetha or the new city, which Agrippa had enclosed by his wall, and, on the south, more than half of Mount Zion,[1] which was left, as Micah foretold, to be *ploughed as a field*. The Jews themselves were prohibited from entering the Holy Land,[2] so that the heathen Celsus says, "They have neither a clod nor a hearth left."[3] Ælia, then, being a new city, Jerusalem was spoken of as having ceased to be. The Roman magistrates, even in Palestine, did not know

[1] See Pierotti's excellent map of Jerusalem (also reduced in his "Jerusalem Explored," n. 3).

[2] Eusebius (l.c.) affirms this on the authority of Aristo of Pella, a contemporary; Tertullian says, "they are not permitted, even in the right of strangers, to greet their native land so much as with the sole of their foot." (Apol. c. 21, p. 45, Oxf. Tr. and adv. Jud. c. 13.) S. Jerome affirms the same (on Isa. vi. 11–13, and on Dan. ix., end). Celsus urges the fact of their total expulsion as a proof of God's breach of promise (in Orig. c. Cels. viii. 69), and Origen agrees as to the fact. S. Justin speaks of their expulsion (as a nation) after their defeat (Dial. c. 110), so that, when he speaks of Jerusalem only (Apol. i. 47), it may have been that he spoke of it alone, as sufficing for the prophecy which he was explaining. The prohibition was subsequently limited to Jerusalem, with the well-known concession to behold it without entering, one day in the year, to weep. Itin. Hieros. p. 591; S. Hil. on Ps. 58, § 7; S. Jer. on Zeph. i. 15, 16, &c. Both S. Chrysostom and S. Augustine speak of the Jews as excluded from Jerusalem. "Dost thou for thy sins, O Jew, remain so long out of Jerusalem?" S. Chrys. adv. Jud. vi. 2. "They were excluded from the place where they crucified Christ; *now* that place is full of Christians who praise Him; it hath no Jew." S. Aug. in Ps. lxii. n. 18. "Now thou seekest a Jew in the city of Jerusalem, and findest not." In Ps. cxxiv. n. 3.

[3] Loc. cit.

the name.[1] Christians too used the name Ælia,[2] and that, in solemn documents, as the Canon of Nice.[3] In the fourth century the city was still called Ælia by the Christians,[4] and, on the first Mohammedan coin [5] in the seventh century, it still bore that name. A series of writers speak of the desolation of Jerusalem. In the next century Origen addresses a Jew, "If going to the earthly city, Jerusalem, thou shalt find it overthrown, reduced to dust and ashes, weep not, as ye now do." [6] "From that [Hadrian's] time until now, the extremest desolation having taken possession of the place, their once renowned hill of Zion—now no wise differing from the rest of the country, is cultivated by Romans, so that we ourselves have with our own eyes observed the place ploughed by oxen and sown all over. And Jerusalem, being inhabited by aliens, has to this day the stones gathered out of it, all the inhabitants, in our own times too, gathering up the stones out of its ruins for their private or public and common buildings. You may observe with your own eyes the mournful sight, how the stones from the Temple itself and from the Holy of holies have been taken for the idol-temples and to build amphitheatres." [7] "Their once holy place has now come to such a state, as in no way to fall short of the overthrow of Sodom." [8] S. Hilary, who had been banished into the East, says, "The royal city of David, taken by the Babylonians

[1] Eus. de mart. Pal. c. 11.

[2] "In the suburbs of what is now Ælia," Eus. H. E. ii. 12, add vi. 20, de mart. Pal. c. 11 (Deyl). [3] Can. vii.

[4] "From that [Hadrian's] time until now, it is called Ælia from the name of him who conquered and destroyed it" (S. Chrys. adv. Jud. v. 11, T. i. p. 645). "Which is now Ælia" (S. Jer. Ep. 129, ad Dard, § 5).

[5] De Saulcy, p. 188.

[6] In Jos. Hom. xvii. 1. Opp. ii. 438.

[7] Eus. Dem. Ev. viii. 8, p. 406. [8] Ib. v. 23, p. 250.

and overthrown, held not its queenly dignity under the rule of its lords; but, taken afterwards and burnt by the Romans, it now is not."[1] S. Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop of the new town, in delivering his catechetical lectures in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, pointed out to his hearers the fulfilment of prophecy: "The place [Zion] is now filled with gardens of cucumbers."[2] "If they [the Jews] plead the captivity," says S. Athanasius,[3] "and say that on that ground Jerusalem is not." "The whole world, over which they are scattered," says S. Gregory of Nazianzum,[4] "is one monument of their calamity, their worship closed, and the soil of Jerusalem itself scarcely known."

It is apparently part of the gradual and increasing fulfilment of God's word, that the ploughing of the city and of the site of the Temple, and the continued cultivation of so large a portion of Zion, are recorded in the last visitation when its iniquity was full. It still remains *ploughed as a field*. "At the time I visited this sacred ground, one part of it supported a crop of barley, another was undergoing the labour of the plough, and the soil, turned up, consisted of stone and lime filled with earth, such as is usually met with in the foundations of ruined cities. It is nearly a mile in circumference."[5] "On the S.E. Zion slopes down, in a series of cultivated terraces, sharply though not abruptly, to the sites of the kings' gardens.—Here and round to the S. the whole declivities are sprinkled with olive trees, which grow luxuriantly among the narrow slips of corn."[6] Not Christians only, but Jews also have seen herein the fulfilment upon themselves of Micah's words, spoken now "twenty-six centuries ago."

[1] S. Hil. in Ps. 131, § 18. [2] Lect. xvi. 9, § 18; see Oxf. Tr.
[3] De Incarn., n. 39, T. i. p. 81, Ben. [4] Orat. 6, § 18, Ben.
[5] Richardson's Travels, p. 359, quoted by Keith on Prophecy, p. 257. [6] Porter, Handbook, p. 92.

CHAPTER IV

1 *The glory,* 3 *peace,* 8 *kingdom,* 11 *and victory of the Church.*

BUT [a] in the last days it shall come to pass, *that*

[a] Isa. ii. 2, &c.; Ezek. xvii. 22, 23.

CHAP. IV. ver. 1. *But* [*And*] *in the last days it shall come to pass.* God's promises, goodness, truth, fail not. He withdraweth His Presence from those who receive Him not, only to give Himself to those who will receive Him. Mercy is the sequel and end of chastisement. Micah then joins on this great prophecy of future mercy to the preceding woe, as its issue in the order of God's Will. *And it shall be.* He fixes the mind to some great thing which shall come to pass; *it shall be.* Then follows, in marked reference to the preceding privations, a superabundance of mercy. For *the mountain of the house,* which should be as a *forest* and which was *left unto* them *desolate,* there is *the mountain of the Lord's house established;* for *the heap of dust and the ploughed field,* there is the flowing-in of the Gentiles; for the *night* and *darkness,* that *there shall be no vision,* there is the fulness of revelation; for corrupt judgment, teaching, divining, a law from God Himself going forth through the world; for the building of Jerusalem with blood, one universal peace.

In the last days, lit. *the end*[1] *of the days,* i.e. of those

[1] Gesenius adduces, as the single instance in which אחרית is to mean "sequel," Isa. xlvi. 10, where "the end" answers to "the beginning," ראשית to אחרית. It is the *end* of the year, Deut. xi. 12; the *end* of a person, Prov. v. 4; Ps. xxxvii. 37; of a nation, Jer. xxxi. 17; of a thing, i.e. its issue, Prov. xxiii. 32; "the *end* of the sea," Ps. cxxxix. 9.

the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be

days which are in the thoughts of the speaker. Politically, there are many beginnings and many endings; as many endings as there are beginnings, since all human polity begins only to end, and to be displaced in its turn by some new beginning, which too runs its course only to end. Religiously, there are but two consummations. All time, since man fell, is divided into two halves, the looking forward to Christ to come in humility; the looking forward to His Coming in glory. These are the two events on which man's history turns. To that former people the whole period of Christ's kingdom was one future, the fulness of all their own shadows, types, sacrifices, services, prophecies, longings, being. The *end of* their *days* was the beginning of the new Day of Christ: the coming of His Day was necessarily the close of the former days, the period of the dispensation which prepared for it. The Prophets then by the words, *the end of the days*, always mean the times of the Gospel.[1] *The end of the days* is the close of all which went before, the last dispensation, after which there shall be no other. Yet this too has *last days* of its own, which shall close God's kingdom of grace and shall issue in the Second Coming of Christ; as the end of those former days, which closed the times of "the law," issued in His First Coming. We are then at once living in the *last times*, and looking on to a *last time* still to

The phrase is rendered rightly by the Ch. סוף יומיא. The ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων of S. Paul, S. Peter, and S. Jude is nearly the translation of באחרית הימים.

[1] Hosea iii. 5; Isa. ii. 2; Jer. xxiii. 20; xxx. 24; xlviii. 47; xlix. 39; Ezek. xxxviii. 16; Dan. x. 14. Daniel uses it in Chaldee (ii. 28). Nebuchadnezzar's dream which he is interpreting ended in the kingdom of Christ. On the Jewish agreement, see on Hosea iii. 5.

come. In the one way S. Peter speaks of *the last times*,[1] or *the end of the times*,[2] *in* which *Christ was manifested for* us, in contrast *with the foundations of the world, before* which He *was foreordained*. And S. Paul contrasts God's *speaking to the fathers by the Prophets*,[3] and *at the end of these days* [4] *speaking to us in the Son;* and of our Lord coming [5] *at the end, consummation, of the times*,[6] *to put away sins by the sacrifice of Himself;* and says that the things which befell the Jews [7] *were written for our admonition, unto whom the ends of the times* [8] [i.e. of those of the former people of whom he had been speaking] *are come;* and S. John speaks of this as *the last time*.[9] In the other way, they contrast *the last days*, not with the times before them but with their own, and then plainly they are a last and distant part of this their own *last time*. *The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith:* [10] *In the last days perilous times shall come:* [11] *There shall come at the end of the days scoffers:* [12] *They told you that there should be mockers in the last time.*[13] The Jews distributed all time between "this world" and "the coming world," [14] including under "the coming world" the time of grace

[1] 1st Ep. i. 20.

[2] According to the reading *ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν χρόνων*, preferred by Alter and Tischendorf.

[3] Heb. i. 1.

[4] *ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων*, preferred by Griesbach, Matthiæ, Scholz, Tisch.

[5] Heb. ix. 26.

[6] *ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων*, comp. S. Matt. xiii. 40; xxiv. 3.

[7] 1 Cor. x. 11.

[8] *τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων*.

[9] 1 John ii. 18.

[10] 1 Tim. iv. 1, *ἐν ὑστέροις χρόνοις*.

[11] 2 Tim. iii. 1, *ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις*.

[12] 2 Pet. iii. 3, *ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν*, preferred by Griesb. Alter, Matthæi, Scholz.

[13] Jude 18, *ἐν ἐσχάτῳ χρόνῳ* or *ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τοῦ χρόνου*, preferred by Scholz, Tisch.

[14] עולם הוה and עולם הבא. See Schöttg. de Messia, i. 2, 4, pp. 23–27.

established in the top of the mountains, and it shall

under the Messiah's reign, and the future glory. To us the names have shifted, since this present world[1] is to us the kingdom of Christ, and there remains nothing further on this earth to look to, beyond what God has already given us. Our future then, placed as we are between the two Comings of our Lord, is, of necessity, beyond this world.[2]

The mountain of the house of the Lord shall be [*abidingly*] *established.* He does not say merely, *it shall be established.* Kingdoms may be established at one time, and then come to an end. He says, *it shall be a thing established.*[3] His saying is expanded by Daniel: *In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall not be destroyed for ever, and it shall abide for ever.*[4] *The house of the Lord* was the centre of His worship, the token of His Presence, the pledge of His revelations and of His abiding acceptance, protection, favour. All these were to be increased and continuous. The image is one familiar to us in the Hebrew Scriptures. People were said to *go up*[5] to it, as to a place of dignity. In the Psalm on the carrying of the Ark thither, *the hill of God* is compared to the many-topped mountains of Basan[6] (the Hermon-peaks which bound Basan), and so declared to

[1] S. Matt. xiii. 40; Eph. i. 21; Titus ii. 12.

[2] S. Mark x. 30; S. Luke xviii. 30; xx. 35; Eph. l.c.; Heb. vi. 5. Attention to this language of Holy Scripture and the distant future which it looks on to, should have saved misbelievers from imagining that Apostles erroneously expected a near end of the world.

[3] יהיה נכון, as in 1 Kings ii. 45, of the throne of David. "It is an expression denoting continuance and perpetuity, that it shall continually remain on its settlement." Poc. from Abarb.

[4] Dan. ii. 44.

[5] See on Hosea i. 11.

[6] Ps. lxviii. 16, 17.

be greater than they, as being the object of God's choice. The mountain where God was worshipped rose above the mountains of idolatry. Ezekiel, varying the image, speaks of the Gospel as an overshadowing cedar, *planted* by God *upon an high mountain and an eminent, in the mountain of the height of Israel, under* which *should dwell all fowl of every wing*;[1] and, in his vision of the Temple, he sees this, the image of the Christian Church, *upon a very high mountain.*[2] Our Lord speaks of His Apostles and the Church in them, as *a city set upon a hill which cannot be hid.*[3] The seat of God's worship was to be seen far and wide; nothing was to obscure it. It, now lower than the surrounding hills, was then to be as on the summit of them. Human elevation, the more exalted it is, the more unstable is it. Divine greatness alone is at once solid and exalted. The new kingdom of God was at once to be *exalted above the hills*, and *established on the top of the mountains; exalted*, at once, above everything human, and yet *established*, strong as the mountains on which it rested, and unassailable, unconquerable, seated secure aloft, between heaven, whence it came and to which it tends, and earth, on which it just rests in the sublime serenity of its majesty.

The image sets forth the supereminence of the Lord's House above all things earthly. It does not define wherein that greatness consists. The flowing in of the nations is a fruit of it.[4] The immediate object of their coming is explained to be, to learn to know and to do the will of God.[5] But the new revelation does not form all its greatness. That greatness is from the Presence of God, revealing and evermore teaching His Will, ruling, judging, rebuking, peacemaking.[6] "The *mountain of the Lord's House* was then *exalted above the hills* by the bodily

[1] Ezek. xvii. 22, 23. [2] Ib. xl. 2. [3] S. Matt. v. 14.
[4] Micah iv. 1, 2. [5] Ib. iv. 2. [6] Ib. iv. 3, 4.

be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

Presence of Christ, when He, in the Temple built on that mountain, spake, preached, worked so many miracles; as, on the same ground, Haggai saith,[1] *the glory of this latter house shall be greater than* the glory of *the former.*" [2] "This *mountain,* the Church of Christ, transcends all laws, schools, doctrines, religions, synagogues of Jews and Philosophers, which seemed to rise aloft among men, like mountain-tops, yea, whatever under the sun is sublime and lofty, it will overpass, trample on, subdue to itself." [3]

Even Jews have seen the meaning of this figure. Their oldest mystical book [4] explains it. "*And it shall be in the last days,* when namely the Lord shall visit the daughter of Jacob, then shall *the mountain of the house of the Lord be firmly established,* i.e. the Jerusalem which is above, which shall stand firmly in its place, that it may shine by the light which is above. (For no light can retain its existence, except through the light from above.) For in that time shall the light from above shine sevenfold more than before; according to that, *Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun; and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people and healeth the stroke of their wound.*" [5] Another, of the dry literal school, says: "It is well known that the house of the Temple is not high. The meaning then is, that its fame shall go forth far, and there shall return to it from all quarters persons with offerings, so that it shall be, as if it were on the top of all hills, so that all the inhabitants of the earth should see it." [6]

[1] ii. 9. [2] Dion. [3] Lap.
[4] Zohar, f. 93. [5] Isa. xxx. 26. [6] Aben Ezra.

Some[1] interpret *the mountain* to be Christ, Who is called *the Rock*,[2] on the confession of Whom, God-man, *the house of the Lord*, i.e. the Church is built,[3] *the precious Corner-stone*,[4] which is laid, beside which *no foundation can* be laid;[5] the *great mountain*, of which Daniel prophesied.[6] It is *firmly established*, so that *the gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church*, being built thereon; *exalted above hills and mountains*, i.e. above all besides, greater or smaller, which has any eminence; for He in truth is *highly exalted and hath a Name above every name*,[7] being *at the Right Hand* of God *in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come;* and *all things are under His Feet.* And this for us, in that He, the Same, is *the Head over all things to the Church which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.*[8] "He is God and Man, King and Priest, King of kings, and a Priest abiding for ever. Since then His Majesty reacheth to the Right Hand of God, neither mountains nor hills, Angels nor holy men, reach thereto; for[9] *to which of the Angels said God at any time, Sit thou on My Right Hand?*"[10]

"Aloft then is the Church of God raised, both in that its Head is in heaven and the Lord of all, and that, on earth, it is not like the Temple, in one small people, but *set on a hill that it cannot be hid*,[11] or remain unseen even

[1] Tert. c. Jud. i. 3; Orig. c. Cels. ii. 33; S. Cypr. Test. ii. 18; Euseb. Ecl. Proph. iv. l, p. 171, ed. Ox. S. Jerome here; S. Aug. de Civ. D. xviii. 30; Ps. Basil on Is.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 4–6.

[3] S. Matt. xvi. 18; see Note Q. on Tertull., p. 492 sqq., Oxf. Tr.

[4] Isa. xxviii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 6; Eph. ii. 20.

[5] 1 Cor. iii. 11.

[6] Dan. ii. 35.

[7] Phil. ii. 9.

[8] Eph. i. 20–23.

[9] Heb. i. 13.

[10] From Rup.

[11] S. Matt. v. 14.

2 And many nations shall come, and say, Come,

to those far from it. Its doctrine too and life are far above the wisdom of this world, showing in them nothing of earth, but are above; its wisdom is the knowledge and love of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, and its *life is hid with Christ in God*, in those who are justified in Him and hallowed by His Spirit."[1] In Him, it is lifted above all things, and with the eyes of the mind beholdeth (as far as may be) the glory of God, soaring on high towards Him Who is the Author of all being, and, filled with Divine light, it owneth Him the Maker of all.

And people [*peoples*, nations] *shall flow unto* [lit. *upon*] *it.* A mighty tide should set in to the Gospel. The word[2] is appropriated to the *streaming in* of multitudes, such as of old poured into Babylon, the merchant-empress of the world.[3] It is used of the distant nations who should throng in one continuous stream into the Gospel, or of Israel streaming together from the four corners of the world.[4] So Isaiah foretells, *Thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that they may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings* may be *brought.*[5] These were to *flow upon it*, perhaps so as to cover it, expressing both the multitude and density of the throng of nations, how full the Church should be, as the swollen river spreads itself over the whole champaign country, and the surging flood-tide climbs up the face of the rock which bounds it. The flood once covered the highest mountains to destroy life; this flood should pour in for the saving of life. "It is a miracle,

[1] From S. Cyr.

[2] נהרו (from נהר, river, stream) is used only figuratively.

[3] Jer. li. 44.

[4] Ib. xxxi. 12. It is used in these places only, and Isa. ii. 2.

[5] Isa. lx. 11; add Rev. xxi. 25, 26.

if waters ascend from a valley and flow to a mountain. So is it a miracle that earthly nations should ascend to the Church, whose doctrine and life are lofty, arduous, sublime. This the grace of Christ effecteth, mighty and lofty, as being sent from heaven. As then waters, conducted from the fountains by pipes into a valley, in that valley bound up and rise nearly to their original height, so these waters of heavenly grace, brought down into valleys, i.e. the hearts of men, make them to bound up with them into heaven and enter upon and embrace a heavenly life."[1]

2. *And many nations shall come.* Isaiah[2] added the word *all* to Micah's prophecy. So our Lord said, *This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations;*[3] and the elect are to be gathered out *of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues.*[4] *All nations shall flow into it.* They *all* might be many or few. Both prophets say that those *all* should be many. Judah probably knew already of many. The history of Genesis gave them a wide-expanding knowledge of the enlargement of mankind after the flood, in Europe, Asia, Africa, as they then existed in their nations. The sons of Japhet had already spread over the whole coast of our Western sea, and far north; the Cimmerians,[5] or Cwmry, Scandinavians,[6] Carpathians[7] (probably Celts), Armenians[8] (including the kindred Phrygians), Scythians,[9] Medes, Ionians,[10] Æolians,[11] Iberians,[12] Cypriotes,[13] Dardani,[14] Tybarenes,[15]

[1] Lap. [2] ii. 2.
[3] S. Matt. xxiv. 14. [4] Rev. vii. 9. [5] Gomer.
[6] Ashkenaz, Scandinavia, Scanzia in Jornandes. Knobel, Völkertafel d. Genesis, p. 35.
[7] Riphath, from whom also the Montes Riphæi are named.
[8] Togarmah. [9] Magog. [10] Javan.
[11] Elishah, Αἰολεῖς or Ἀλεῖς, Knobel; *Elis*, Boch. iii. 4.
[12] Tarshish, "Tarseis, whence the Iberians." Eus. (Tuch ad loc). [13] Chittim. [14] Dodanim. [15] Tubal.

and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and

Moschi,[1] and the Turseni,[2] or perhaps the Thracians. On the east, the sons of Shem had spread in Elam, Asshur, Arrapachitis;[3] they occupied the intervening tract of Aram; in the NW. they reached to Lydia. Southward the sons of Joktan were in Arabia. Micah's hearers knew how, of the sons of Ham, Cush had spread far to the SE. and S. from Babylonia to Æthiopia; Egypt they remembered too well, and, beyond it, they knew of the far-scattered tribes of the Libyans, who extended along the coast of Africa. Phœnician trade filled up this great outline. They themselves had, in Solomon's time, traded with India;[4] about this time, we know that they were acquainted with the furthest East, China.[5] Such was the sight before the human mind of the Prophet; such the extent of the nations whom his people knew of. Some were the deadly enemies of his people; some were to be its conquerors. He knew that the ten tribes were to be

[1] Meshech.

[2] Tiras, Tyrseni (Tuch), Thracians, Boch. iii. 2, Knob.

[3] Arphaxad, Gen. x. 22.

[4] As appears from the Tamul name for the peacock תֻּכִּי Tam. *togai*, 1 Kings x. 22; the Sanskrit or Malabar name for the ape, קוֹף, *kapi* (Ib. see Ges.), which came with the creatures themselves; a Sanskrit name for elephant, *ibha*, in שֶׁנְהַבִּים, "ivory," lit. "elephant's tooth" (Ib.); and a Malabar name for a wood, *algum*, *valgu* (*ka*). See Max Müller, Science of Language, p. 205, ed. 3. Ophir itself (which is mentioned in connection with these things) Max Müller identifies, beyond question, with the Abiria of Ptolemy above Pattalene; the people, "called by Hindu geographers *Abhîra* and "the *Ahîrs*" in "Macmurdo's Account of the Province of Cutch." Ib.

[5] Isa. xlix. 12; see Gesenius Thes. pp. 948–950.

abidingly *wanderers among the nations*,[1] despised by them ;[2] "a people, the strangers and sojourners of the whole world."[3] He knew many of those nations to be sunk in idolatry, viciousness; proud, contemptuous, lawless; he saw them fixed in their idolatries. *All people will walk every one in the name of his god.* But he saw what eye of man could not see, what the will of man could not accomplish, that He, Whom now Judah alone partially worshipped, would turn the hearts of His creatures to Himself, to seek Him, not in their own ways, but as He should reveal Himself at Jerusalem. Micah tells them distinctly, that those who should believe would be a great multitude from *many nations*. In like way Isaiah expresses the great multitude of those for whom Christ should atone. *He bare the sin of many.*[4] *By knowledge of Him shall My righteous Servant make many righteous.*[5] And our Lord Himself says: *The Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many.*[6] *This is My Blood . . . which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*[7] In Micah's time not one people, scarcely some poor fragments of the Jewish people, went up to worship God at Zion, to call to remembrance His benefits, to learn of Him. Those who should thereafter worship Him should be *many nations*.

And say, exhorting one another, in fervour and mutual love, as Andrew exhorted his brother Simon, and Philip Nathanael, and the woman of Samaria those of her city, to come to Christ: and so all since, who have been won by Him, by word or example, by preaching or by deed, in public or in private, bear along with them others to seek Him Whom they themselves have found.

Let us go up, leaving the lowness and earthliness of their

[1] See on Hosea ix. 17.
[2] Ib. viii. 8.
[3] S. Greg. Naz. Or. 22, n. 2.
[4] Isa. liii. 12.
[5] Ib. liii. 11.
[6] S. Matt. xx. 28.
[7] Ib. xxvi. 28; add Rom. v. 15.

to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach

former conversation, and mounting upward on high where Christ is, desiring righteousness, and athirst to know His ways.

To the house of the God of Jacob. They shall seek Him as Jacob sought Him, "who left his father's house and removed into another land, was a man of heavy toils and served for hire, but obtained special help from God, and undistinguished as he was, became most glorious. So too the Church, leaving all Heathen wisdom, and having its conversation in Heaven, and therefore persecuted and enduring many hardships, enjoys now glory with God."[1]

And He, i.e. *the God of Jacob* of Whom he had just spoken, *shall teach us of His ways.* They do not go to God, because they know Him, but *that* they *may* know him. They are drawn by a mighty impulse towards Him. Howsoever attracted, they come, not making bargains with God (as some now would) what they should be taught, that He should reveal to them nothing transcending reason, nothing exceeding or contradicting their notions of God ; they do not come with reserves, that God should not take away *this* or *that* error, or should not disclose anything of His incomprehensibleness. They come in holy simplicity, to learn whatever He will condescend to tell them ; in holy confidence, that He, the Infallible Truth, will teach them infallibly. They say, *of His ways.* For all learning is by degrees, and all which all creatures could learn in all eternity falls infinitely short of His truth and holiness. Nay, in all eternity the highest creature which He has made and which He has admitted most deeply into the secrets of His Wisdom will be as infinitely removed as ever from the full knowledge of His Wisdom and His Love. For what is

[1] Theoph.

finite, enlarged, expanded, accumulated to the utmost degree possible, remains finite still. It has no proportion to the Infinite. But even here, all growth in grace implies growth in knowledge. The more we love God, the more we know of Him; and with increased knowledge of Him come higher perceptions of worship, praise, thanksgiving, of the character of faith, hope, charity, of our outward and inward acts and relations to God, the unboundedness of God's love to us and the manifoldness of the ways of pleasing Him, which, in His love, He has given us. Since then the whole Christian life is a growth in grace, and even S. Paul, *forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth to those which are before, pressed towards the mark for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*,[1] then S. Paul too was ever learning, in intensity, what he knew certainly by revelation, *of His ways*. Again, as each blade of grass is said to differ from another, so, and much more, each soul of man which God has created for Himself. No one ever saw or could imagine two human beings, in whom the grace of God had unfolded itself in exactly the same way. Each saint will have his distinct beauty around the Throne. But then each will have learnt *of His ways*, in a different proportion or degree. His greatest saints, yea His Apostles, have been pre-eminent, the one in one grace, another in another. S. John Baptist came as a pattern of repentance and contempt of self; S. John the Evangelist stands out pre-eminent in deep, tender, burning personal love; S. Paul in zeal to spread the knowledge of Christ crucified; S. Mary Magdalene in loving penitence. Even the Blessed Virgin herself, under inspiration, seems, in part, to speak of her *lowly lowness*,[2] as that which God specially regarded

[1] Phil. iii. 13, 14.

[2] S. Luke i. 47; ταπείνωσις in Prov. xvi. 20; LXX is, "lowliness." The whole phrase, ἐπέβλεψεν ἐπὶ τὴν ταπείνωσιν τῆς δούλης αὐτοῦ, corresponds more to the use in 1 Kings

us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for

in her, when He made her the Mother of God. Eternity only will set forth the fulness of the two words,[1] *He will teach us of His ways.* For eternity will show, how in all *worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will;*[2] and how the countless multitude of the redeemed have corresponded to His gifts and drawings. "The way of the life to God-wards is one, in that it looketh to one end, to please God; but there are many tracks along it, as there are many modes of life;"[3] and each several grace is a part of the way to God.

And we will walk in His paths, "by believing, hoping, loving, well-doing, and bearing patiently all trouble."[4] "For it sufficeth not to believe, unless we act as He commandeth, and strive to enter on His ways, *the strait and narrow path which leadeth unto life.* He Himself then, when He had said,[5] *Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,* added, *teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*"[6] They say too, *we will walk,* i.e. *go on from strength to strength,* not stand still after having laboured for a while to do His Will, but hold on to all His ways and to Himself Who is *the Way until they appear before the Lord in Zion.*

For the *law* [lit. *law*[7]] *shall go forth from Zion.* These are the Prophet's words, declaring why the nations should so flock to Zion. For he says, *shall go forth,* but the nations were not gathered to Zion, until the Gospel was already

(Sam.) i. 11; 2 Kings xvi. 12; 4 Kings xiv. 26; Neh. ix. 9; Ps. ix. 13. LXX where the prominent sense is *low estate.* Perhaps, as in עָנִי, the two meanings are blended.

[1] יורנו מדרכיו. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 11. [3] Theoph.
[4] Dion. [5] S. Matt. xxviii. end. [6] Rup.
[7] תורה, not התורה.

the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

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gone forth. He speaks of it as *law* simply, not *the* Jewish *law* as such, but a rule of life[1] from God. Man's better nature is ill at ease, being out of harmony with God. It cannot be otherwise. Having been made in His likeness, it must be distressed by its unlikeness; having been made by Him for Himself, it must be restless without Him. What they indistinctly longed for, what drew them, was the hope to be conformed by Him to Him. The sight of superhuman holiness, life, love, endurance, ever won and wins those without to the Gospel or the Church. Our Lord Himself gives it, as the substance of prophecy, *that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*[2] The image may be that of a stream, issuing forth from Jerusalem[3] and watering the whole world. "The law of the Gospel and the word of the Apostles, beginning from Jerusalem, as from a fountain, ran through the whole world, watering those who approached with faith."[4] But in that it *went forth*, it may be meant that it left those from among whom it *went forth*, and "Zion was indeed desolate of the law and Jerusalem bared of the Divine word."[5] "The word of God *passed* from Jerusalem to the Gentiles."[6] "For the shadow was done away, and the types ceased, and sacrifices were abolished, and everything of Moses was, in the letter, brought to a close."[7]

[1] תורה is always *law*, not, as some have said, "religion," or "doctrine" generally. It is used without the article, in this sense, as rule of life (Prov. vi. 23; xxviii. 4, 7, 9; xxix. 18), such as the heathen had not (Lam. ii. 9), but which should be revealed to them (here, Isa. ii. 3; li. 4). The תורה corresponds with the יורנו.

[2] S. Luke xxiv. 47. [3] See on Joel iii. 18.

[4] Theod. [5] S. Cyr. [6] S. Jer. [7] Rup.

3 ¶ And he shall judge among many people, and

He does not say here, through whom God would so teach, but he does speak of a direct teaching of God. He does not say only, "God will give us a law," or "will make a revelation of Himself." He speaks of a personal, direct, continuous act of teaching by God, carried on upon earth, whether the teacher be our Lord's word spoken once on earth, which does *not pass away*,[1] or God the Holy Ghost, as teaching in the Church and in the hearts which receive Him. The words which follow speak of a personal reign, as these speak of personal teaching.

3. *And He shall judge among many people and rebuke strong nations afar off.* Hitherto, they had walked each *in their own ways*;[2] now, they sought to be *taught in the ways of God.* Before, they had been lords of the world; now they should own a Judge higher than themselves. They were no common, but *mighty*[3] nations, such as had heretofore been the oppressors of Israel. They were to be many, and those mighty, nations. He should "not only command, but *rebuke*, not weak or petty nations only, but mighty, and those not only near but afar."[4] Mohammed had moral strength through what he stole from the law and the Gospel, and by his owning Christ as the Word of God. He was a heretic rather than a heathen. Fearful scourge as he was, and as his successors have been, all is now decayed, and no *mighty nation* is left upon earth which does not profess the name of Christ.

[1] S. Matt. xxiv. 35. [2] Isa. liii. 6.

[3] עָצוּם, which originally signified bound together (coll. Arab.), thence used of the closing of the eyes (Isa. xxix. 10; xxxiii. 15), included the idea of number. The secondary idea of strength (as we use "well-knit") is so prominent that the idea of number, in the verb, only occurs in Ps. xl. 13; Jer. xv. 8; in the adj., Num. xxxii. 1. [4] Rib.

He shall rebuke them; for it was an office of the Holy Ghost *to reprove the world as to* its *sin, the righteousness* of Christ, *the judgment* of the *prince of this world.*[1] The Gospel conquered the world, not by compromises or concordats, but by convicting it. It alone could *rebuke* with power; for it was, like its Author, all-holy. It could rebuke with efficacy; for it was the word of Him Who *knew what is in man.* It could rebuke with awe; for it knew the secrets of eternal Judgment. It could rebuke winningly; for it knew *the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.*[2] Its martyrs suffered and rebuked their judges; and the world was amazed at the impotence of power and the might of suffering. It rebuked the enthroned idolatry of centuries; it set in rebellion by its rebukes every sinful passion of man, and it subdued them. Tyrants, whom no human power could reach, trembled before its censures. Then only is it powerless, if its corrupted or timid or paralysed ministers forfeit in themselves the power of rebuke.

And they shall beat their spears into ploughshares. "All things are made new in Christ." As the inward disquiet of evil men makes them restless, and vents itself towards others in envy, hatred, maliciousness, wrong, so the inward peace whereof He saith, *My peace I give unto you*, shall, wherever it reacheth, spread out abroad and, by the power of grace, bring to "all nations unity, peace, and concord."[3] All, being brought under the one empire of Christ, shall be in harmony one with the other. As far as in it lies, the Gospel *is* a Gospel of peace, and makes peace. Christians, as far as they obey Christ, are at peace, both in themselves and with one another. And this is what is here prophesied. The peace follows from His rule. Where He judges and rebukes, there even the mighty *beat their swords into ploughshares.* The universal peace,

[1] S. John xvi. 8–11. [2] Eph. iii. 19. [3] Litany.

rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat

amid which our Lord was born in the flesh, the first which there had been since the foundation of the Roman empire, was, in God's Providence, a fruit of His kingdom. It was no chance coincidence, since nothing is by chance. God willed that they should be contemporaneous. It was fitting that the world should be still, when its Lord, the Prince of peace, was born in it. That outward cessation of public strife, though but for a brief time, was an image how His peace spread backwards as well as forwards, and of the peace which through Him, our Peace, was dawning on the world. "First, according to the letter, before that Child was born to us, *on* Whose *shoulder the government is*,[1] the whole world was full of blood; people fought against people, kings against kings, nations against nations. Lastly, the Roman state itself was torn by civil wars, in whose battles all kingdoms shed blood. But after that, at the time of the Empire of Christ, Rome gained an undivided empire, the world was laid open to the journeys of Apostles, and the gates of cities were open to them, and, for the preaching of the One God, one single empire was formed. It may too be understood as an image, that, on receiving the faith of Christ, anger and unrestrained revilings were laid aside, so that each *putteth his hand to the plough and looketh* not *back*, and, breaking in pieces the shafts of contumelies, seeketh to reap spiritual fruit, so that, *others labouring, we enter into their labours;* and of us it is said, *They shall come with joy, bringing their sheaves.*[2] Now no one fighteth; for we read, *Blessed are the peacemakers;*[3] no one learneth to *strive, to the subverting of the hearers.*[4] *And every one shall rest under his vine*, so as to

[1] Isa. ix. 6.
[2] Ps. cxxvi. 6.
[3] S. Matt. v. 9.
[4] 2 Tim. ii. 14.

press out that *Wine which gladdeneth the heart of man,*[1] under that *Vine*, whereof the *Father is the Husbandman;* [2] and *under his fig-tree*, gathering the sweet [3]*fruits of the* Holy *Spirit, love, joy, peace*, and the rest." [4]

The fathers had indeed a joy, which we have not, that wars were not between Christians; for although "just wars are lawful," war cannot be on both sides just; very few wars have not, on both sides, what is against the spirit of the Gospel. For, except where there is exceeding wickedness on one side, or peril of further evil, the words of our Lord would hold good, in public as in private, *I say unto you, that ye resist not evil.*[5]

This prophecy, then, is fulfilled (1) in the character of the Gospel. "The law of the Gospel worketh and preserveth peace. For it plucketh up altogether the roots of all war, avarice, ambition, injustice, wrath. Then, it teacheth to bear injuries, and, so far from requiting them, willeth that we be prepared to receive fresh wrongs. He saith, *If any one smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also, &c.*[6] *I say unto you, Love your enemies, &c.*[7] For neither did the old law give these counsels, nor did it explain so clearly the precept implied in them, nor had it that wonderful and most efficacious example of the patience and love of Christ, nor did it supply grace, whereby peace could be preserved; whereas now the first-fruits of the Spirit are *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness.*" [8] (2) The prophecy has been fulfilled within and without, among individuals or bodies of men, in body or mind, in temper or in deed, as far as the Gospel has prevailed. *The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one mind;* [9] one, through One indwelling Spirit; one, though a great multitude, through one bond of love.

[1] Ps. civ. 15. [2] S. John, xv. 1. [3] Gal. v. 22.
[4] S. Jer. [5] S. Matt. v. 39. [6] S. Matt. v. 39–42.
[7] Ib. v. 44–48. [8] Rib. [9] Acts iv. 32.

their swords into [a] plowshares, and their spears into

[a] Isa. ii. 4; Joel iii. 10.

"See how these Christians love one another;" [1] "see how ready they are to die for one another," was, in the third century, a heathen proverb as to Christian love. "They love one another, almost before they know one another." [2] "Their first lawgiver has persuaded them that they are all brethren." [3] "We (which grieves you)," the Christian answered,[4] "so love one another, because we know not how to hate. We call ourselves 'brethren,' which you take ill, as men who have one Father, God, and are sharers in one faith, in one hope, co-heirs." For centuries, too, there was, for the most part, public peace of Christians among themselves. Christian soldiers fought only, as constrained by the civil law, or against barbarian invaders, to defend life, wife, children, not for ambition, anger, or pride. Christians could then appeal, in fulfilment of the prophecy, to this outward, the fruit of the inward, peace. "We," says an early martyr,[5] "who formerly stained ourselves with mutual slaughter, not only do not wage war with foes, but even, in order not to lie and deceive those who consume us, willingly professing Christ, meet death." "From the coming of the Lord," says another martyr,[6] "the New Testament, reconciling unto peace, and a life-giving law, went forth into all lands. If then another law

[1] Tertull. Apol. c. 39. "For they themselves hate one another." "For they themselves are more ready to slay one another," are Tertullian's statements as to the contemporary condition of the heathen, which their amazement at Christian love rather confirms.

[2] Minut. Felix, p. 81, ed. Ouz.

[3] Lucian, De morte Peregrini, i. 507, ed. Græv.

[4] Min. F., pp. 312, 313. [5] S. Justin M., Apol. i. 39.

[6] S. Iren. iv. 34, 4.

and word, going forth from Jerusalem, produced such peace among the nations which received it, and thereby *reproved much people* of want of wisdom, then it would follow that the prophets spake of some other. But if *the law of liberty*, that is, the law of God preached by the Apostles, which went forth out of Jerusalem to all the world, worked such a transformation, that swords and spears of war He wrought into ploughshares and pruning-hooks, instruments of peace, and now men know not how to fight, but, when smitten, yield the other cheek, then the prophets spake of no other, but of Him who brought it to pass." "Even from this," says Tertullian,[1] "you may know that Christ was promised, not as one mighty in war, but as a peace-bringer. Either deny that these things were prophesied, since they are plain to see; or, since they are written, deny that they are fulfilled. But if thou mayest deny neither, thou must own that they are fulfilled in Him, of Whom they are prophesied." "Of old," says S. Athanasius,[2] "Greeks and Barbarians, being idolaters, warred with one another, and were fierce towards those akin. For through their implacable warfare no one might pass land or sea, unarmed. Their whole life was passed in arms; the sword was to them for staff and stay. They worshipped idols, sacrificed to demons, and yet from their reverence for idols they could gain no help to correct their minds. But when they passed into the school of Christ, then, of a truth, pricked in mind, they wondrously laid aside their savage slaughters, and now think no more of things of war; for now all peace and friendship are alone their mind's delight. Who then did this, Who blended in peace those who hated one another, save the Beloved Son of the Father, the common Saviour of all, Christ Jesus, Who, through His love, endured all things for our

[1] Adv. Marc. iii. 21. [2] De Incarn. Verbi Dei, c. 51, 52.

* pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword

* Or, *scythes.*

salvation? For of old, too, the peace which should hold sway from Him was prophesied, *they shall beat their swords into ploughshares.* Nor is this incredible, since now, too, the Barbarians with innate savageness, while they yet sacrifice to their idols, are mad with one another, and cannot for one hour part with their swords. But when they have received the teaching of Christ, forthwith for ever they turn to husbandry; and, in lieu of arming their hands with swords, stretch them out to prayer. And altogether, instead of warring with one another, they arm themselves against the devil and demons, warring against them with modesty and virtue of soul. This is a token of the Godhead of the Saviour. For what men could not learn among idols, this they have learned from Him. Christ's disciples, having no war with one another, array themselves against demons by their life and deeds of virtue, chase them and mock their captain the devil, chaste in youth, enduring in temptation, strong in toils, tranquil when insulted, unconcerned when despoiled."

And yet later, S. Chrysostom says, "Before the Coming of Christ, all men armed themselves and no one was exempt from this service, and cities fought with cities, and everywhere were men trained to war. But now most of the world is in peace; all engage in mechanical art or agriculture or commerce, and few are employed in military service for all. And of this too the occasion would cease, if we acted as we ought and did not need to be reminded by afflictions."[1] "After the Sun of righteousness dawned, so far are all cities and nations from living in such perils, that they know not even how to take in hand any affairs

[1] In Ps. xliv. § 3, T. v. p. 186.

against nation, [a] neither shall they learn war any more.

[a] Ps. lxxii. 7.

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of war.—Or if there be still any war, it is far off at the extremity of the Roman Empire, not in each city and country, as heretofore. For then, in any one nation, there were countless seditions and multiform wars. But now the whole earth which the sun surveys from the Tigris to the British Isles, and therewith Lybia too and Egypt and Palestine, yea, all beneath the Roman rule,—ye know how all enjoy complete security, and learn of war only by hearsay."[1] S. Cyril[2] and Theodoret[2] carry on this account into the fifth century after our Lord's Coming. Christians, then, during those four centuries could point to a present fulfilment of prophecy, when we, for our sins, can only speak of the past. *The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save: neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but* our *iniquities have separated between* us, *and* our *God, and* our *sins have hid* His *Face from* us, *that He will not hear.*[3] Those first Christians could urge against the Jews the fulfilment of their prophecies herein, where the Jews can now urge upon us their seeming non-fulfilment: "In the time of king Messiah, after the wars of Gog and Magog, there shall be peace and tranquillity in all the world, and the sons of men shall have no need of weapons, but these promises were not fulfilled."[4] The prophecy is fulfilled, in that the Gospel is a Gospel of peace and makes peace. Christians, as far as they obey Christ, are at peace both in themselves and with one another. The promises of God are perfect on His part: He is faithful to them. But He so wills to be freely loved by His intelligent

[1] In Isa. ii. n. 5, T. vi. pp. 24, 25. [2] On Isa. ii. and here.
[3] Isa. lix. 1, 2. [4] R. Isaac, Munim. Fid. i. 5, 7, et all.

4 [a] But they shall sit every man under his vine

[a] 1 Kings iv. 25; Zech. iii. 10.

creatures whom He formed for His love, that He does not force our free agency. We can fall short of His promises, if we will. To those only who will it, the Gospel brings peace, stilling the passions, quelling disputes, banishing contentions, removing errors, calming concupiscence, soothing and repressing anger, in individuals, nations, the Church; giving oneness of belief, harmony of soul, contentment with our own, love of others as ourselves; so that whatever is contrary to this has its origin in something which is not of Christ nor of His Gospel.

4. *But (And) they shall sit every man, under his vine and under his fig-tree.* Palestine was a home of the vine and the fig-tree. Vineyards were a common property, possessed by all but the very poor,[1] or even by them.[2] The land was *a land of bread and vineyards.*[3] The vine was the emblem of the people, in Psalmists and Prophets.[4] The bunch of grapes or the vine-leaf appear as characteristic emblems on Jewish coins,[5] chiefly in the times of their

[1] This is implied in the laws concerning them, as Exod. xxiii. 11; Lev. xix. 10; xxv. 3, 4; Deut. xx. 6, &c.; comp. Num. xvi. 14; Deut. vi. 11; 1 Sam. viii. 14.; xxii. 7; 2 Kings xviii. 32; Ps. cvii. 37; Prov. xxxi. 16.

[2] Neh. v. 4; Jer. xxxix. 10. [3] 2 Kings xviii. 32.

[4] Ps. lxxx. 8 sqq.; Isa. iii. 14; v. 1 sqq.; xxvii. 2; Jer. ii. 21; xii. 10; Ezek. xv., xvii. 5–10; xix. 10; Hosea x. 1.

[5] The bunch of grapes appears on coins of Herod Archelaus, Madden, Jew. Coinage, pp. 94, 95; also of Tiberius, Ib. p. 144. See De Saulcy, pp. 134, 140, 141. The golden vine, given by Alexander to the Romans, is mentioned by Strabo (Jos. Ant., 14, 31). The vine-tree stood at the porch of the Temple for receiving alms. Middoth, 3, 8; in Levy Jüd. Münz., p. 134; Madden, p. 210.

and under his fig tree; and none shall make *them*

revolts under Vespasian and Hadrian.[1] The fig is also mentioned as part of the characteristic fruitfulness of Palestine.[2] It too was a universal property.[3] Both formed natural arbours; the fig had its name probably from its length,[4] the vine from the arch made by its drooping boughs.[5] Both formed, in those hot countries, a grateful shade. The vine, rising with its single stem, was spread over trellis-work or by props, so as to enclose a considerable space.[6] Even in Italy, a single vine shaded a portico.[7] In Palestine it grew *by the walls of the house*.[8] Rabbins relate how their forefathers sat and studied under the fig-tree,[9] as Nathanael was doubtless meditating or praying under one, when Jesus, being God, saw him.[10] It exhibits a picture of domestic peace, each family gathered in harmony and rest under the protection of God, each content with what they have, neither coveting another's

[1] Madden, pp. 162, 164, 167, 168, 170, 172, 173, 177, 180, 206, 207, 208, 209. See also De Saulcy, pp. 160, 161, 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, &c.

[2] Deut. viii. 8. [3] 2 Kings xviii. 32.

[4] תאנה (its name still in the East), from תאן, i.q. תנן.

[5] גפן, i.q. גבן.

[6] "We passed the evening under a large vine, whose stem was about 1½ foot in diameter. Its height was 30 feet; its branches had to be propped up; and so it covered an arbour more than 50 feet wide and long. I remembered Micah. I have seen in this land the people living under both the fig and the vine; the fig between Jerusalem and Arimathea; the vine, here [Beitjin]." Schulz. Leit., v. 285, in Paulus Reisen, vii. 103.

[7] Plin. N. H. xiv. 3. [8] Ps. cxxiii. 3.

[9] "R. Haia and his disciples—others say, R. Akiba, used to rise very early and sit and study under a fig-tree." Bereshith Rabba in Winer Reallex.

[10] S. John i. 48.

afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken *it*.

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nor disturbed in their own. Wine is explained in Holy Scripture to be an emblem of gladness, and the fig of sweetness.[1] "For exceeding sweet is the word of the Saviour, and it knoweth how to gladden man's heart; sweet also and full of joy is the hope of the future, wherewith we are enriched in Christ."[2]

Such had been Israel's lot in the peaceful days of Solomon,[3] the peace of whose times had already been made the image of the Gospel;[4] the coming of the Queen *of the South from the uttermost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon*,[5] had made her kingdom to be selected as an emblem of those who should *fall down before* Christ and *serve Him*.[6] "Such is that most quiet fearlessness which the law of Christ bringeth, as being the law of charity, peace, and concord."[7]

And none shall make them afraid. "Neither man, nor devil; for the Lord hath given us power to *tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy*, and said, *nothing shall by any means hurt you*,[8] and bade us, [9]*fear not them which kill the body*."[10] Witness the might which He gave to His Apostles and Martyrs.

For the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it. The

[1] Judges ix. 11, 13. "The דבלה is the fig, distinguished for its more perfect sweetness, so that none such can be found, save in the land of Israel." Maimonid. in Demai, c. ii. § 1, in Cels. Hierob. ii. 369. "It is appropriated to the food of man." Id. de jure anni 7 et jubil. c. v. § 8. Ib. Our Lord made it, as well as the grape, the figure of good fruit, which an evil nature could not bear, S. Matt. vii. 16; S. Luke vi. 44.

[2] S. Cyr. [3] 1 Kings iv. 25. [4] Ps. lxxii.
[5] S. Matt. xii. 42. [6] Ps. lxxii. 10, 11. [7] Lap.
[8] S. Luke x. 19. [9] S. Matt. x. 28. [10] Theoph.

5 For [a] all people will walk every one in the name

[a] Jer. ii. 11.

prophets often add this, when what they say, seems, for its greatness, past belief. Yet it will be, because He hath spoken it, *the Lord* Who changeth not, *the Lord of Hosts*, to Whose commands all creatures are subject, Whose word is truth, with Whom to speak is to do.

5. *For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God.* Hitherto unsteadfastness had been the very characteristic sin of Israel. It was "constant only in its inconstancy,"[1] ever *falling away like their forefathers, starting aside like a broken bow.*[2] The heathen persevered in their worship, because it was evil or had evil in it, not checking but feeding their passions. Israel did not persevere in his, because it required him to deny himself things unlawful. *Hath a nation changed their gods which are yet no gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.*[3] Henceforth, the Prophet professeth for his people, the true Israel, that he will be as steadfast in good as the heathen in evil; so our Lord sets forth *the children of this world in their generation*, as an example of wisdom to *the children of light.*[4]

"[5] They who are eager to go up into the mountain of the Lord, and wish to learn thoroughly His ways, promise a ready obedience, and receive in themselves the glories of the life in Christ, and undertake with their whole strength to be earnest in all holiness. 'For let every one,' he saith, 'in every country and city go the way himself chooseth, and pass his life as to him seemeth good; but our care is Christ, and His laws we will make our straight path; we

[1] Rib. [2] Ps. lxxviii. 57. [3] Jer. ii. 11.
[4] S. Luke xvi. 8. [5] S. Cyr.

of his god, and [a] we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

[a] Zech. x. 12.

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will walk along with Him ; and that not for this life only, present or past, but yet more for what is beyond.' *It is a faithful saying. For they who* now *suffer with Him*, shall walk with Him for ever, and *with Him be glorified, and with Him reign.*[1] But *they* make Christ their care, who prefer nothing to His love, who cease from the vain distractions of the world, and seek rather righteousness and what is pleasing unto Him, and to excel in virtue. Such an one was the divine Paul; for he writeth, *I am crucified with Christ;* and now no longer *I live, but Christ liveth in me;*[2] and again, *I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*[3]

To *walk* is so uniformly in Holy Scripture used of a person's moral or religious "ways"[4] (as we say), that the Prophet here too is doubtless speaking of the opposite religious ways of the heathen and of the future people of God. The *name* was often, in Hebrew, expressive of the character ; and, in regard to God Himself, that Name which He vouchsafed to give to Himself,[5] expressed His Self-existence, and, as a result, His Unchangeableness and His

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12 ; Rom. viii. 17 ; Rev. iii. 4.

[2] Gal. ii. 20. [3] 1 Cor. ii. 2.

[4] As to *walk in God's statutes* (Ezek. v. 6, 7, &c., and seven other places), *in His judgments* (Ps. lxxix. 31 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 27), *in His commandments* (2 Chron. xvii. 4), *in His law* (Ps. lxxviii. 10, &c.), *in His fear* (Neh. v. 9), and, in the corresponding place in Isaiah, *in the light of the Lord* (Isa. ii. 5). See Ges. Thes, v. הלך, p. 378, and on Micah ii. 11. So again to *walk with God* (Gen. v. 22), or *before God* (Ib. xvii. 1), or *contrary to God* (Lev. xxvi. 21).

[5] יהוה. See on Hosea xii. 5.

Faithfulness. The names, by which it was foretold that Christ should be called, express both His Deity and attributes;[1] the human Name, which He bare and vouchsafes to bear yet, was significant of His office for us, Saviour.[2] *To praise the Name of the Lord*, then, is to praise Him in that character or relation which He has revealed to us. "He *walketh in the Name of the Lord*, who ordereth every act and motion worthily of the vocation wherewith he is called, and, [3] *whether he eateth or drinketh, doth all to the glory of God*."[4] This promise hath its own reward; for it is *for ever and ever*. They who *walk in the Name of the Lord*, shall *walk before Him in the land of the living, for ever and ever*.[5] Such walk on, with quickened steps, lingering not, *in the Name of the Lord our God*, i.e. doing all things in His Name, as His great Name requires, conformed to the holiness and all other qualities which His Name expresseth. *For ever and ever*, lit. *for ever and yet*, or, more strictly still, *for that which is hidden and yet*, which is the utmost thought of eternity we can come to. Time indeed has no relation to eternity; for time, being God's creature, is finite; eternity, being the mode of the existence of God, is infinite. Still, practically to us, our nearest conception of eternity is existence on and on and on, an endless, unchanging, ever-prolonged future, lost in distance and *hidden* from us, and then, *and yet*, an ever-to-come *yet*, which shall never come to an end. Well then may we not faint, as though it were long to toil or to do without this or that, since the part of our way which lies amid toils and weariness is so short, and will soon be at an end; what lies beyond, in joy, is infinite in infinite joy, ever full and still ever a *yet* to come.

The Prophet says, *we will walk;* "uniting himself in longing, hope, faith, to the sons of the New Testament,

[1] Isa. vii. 14, Immanuel, i.e. God with us; ix. 6, Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, &c.
[2] S. Matt. i. 21. [3] 1 Cor. x. 31. [4] Theoph. [5] Ps. cxvi. 9.

6 In that day, saith the LORD, [a] will I assemble her that halteth, [b] and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted;

[a] Ezek. xxxiv. 16; Zeph. iii. 19.
[b] Ps. cxlvii. 2; Ezek. xxxiv. 13; and xxxvii. 21.

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i.e. Christians, as his brethren, reborn by the grace of the same Christ;"[1] "ministers of the Old, heirs of the New Testament, because they loved through that same faith whereby we love; believing in the Incarnation, Passion, Resurrection of Christ yet to be, as we believe in it, having been."[2]

6. *In that day*, i.e. in that day of Christ and of His Gospel, of grace and salvation, *the last days* of which he had been speaking. Hitherto he had prophesied the glory of Zion, chiefly through the coming-in of the Gentiles. Now he adds, how the Jews should, with them, be gathered by grace into the one fold, in that long last day of the Gospel, at the beginning, in the course of it, and completely at the end.[3]

Her that halteth. The Prophet resumes the image of the scattered flock, under which he had before [4] foretold their restoration. This was no hope of his own, but *His* word Who cannot fail. The course of events, upon which he is entering, would be, at times, for their greatness and their difficulty, past human belief. So he adds straightway, at the outset, *saith the Lord*. To *halt* is used of bodily lameness,[5] and that, of a flock, worn out by its wanderings.[6] It is used also of moral halting,[7] such as had been a chief sin of Israel, serving partly God, partly Baal;[8] God, with a

[1] Tir.
[2] S. Aug. c. 2 Epp. Pelag. iii. 4.
[3] Rom. xi. 26.
[4] ii. 12, 13.
[5] Gen. xxxii. 32.
[6] Zeph. iii. 19.
[7] Ps. xxxv. 15; xxxviii. 18.
[8] 1 Kings xviii. 21. The word is different here.

7 And I will make her that halted [a] a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and

[a] Micah ii. 12; v. 3, 7, 8; vii. 18.

service of fear, Baal, with a service of that counterfeit of love, sensuality. So it was *sick*, both in body and soul, and *driven out*[1] also, and *afflicted*.

7. *And her that was cast off a strong nation.* The prophecy, that there should be a remnant, was depressing. Yet what a remnant should it be! A remnant, which should multiply like the stars of heaven or the sand on the seashore. Israel had never been *a strong nation*, as a kingdom of this world. At its best estate, under David, it had subdued the petty nations around it, who were confederated to destroy it. It had never competed with the powers of this world, East or West, Egypt or Nineveh, although God had at times marvellously saved it from being swallowed up by them. *Now*, the remnant of Judah, which itself was but a remnant of the undivided people, was to become *a strong nation*. So Isaiah prophesied, *A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation.*[2] Plainly not in temporal greatness, both because human strength was not, and could not be, its characteristic, and because the Prophet had been speaking of spiritual restoration.

"*Strong* are they, whom neither torture nor allurements can separate from the love of Christ."[3] "Strong are they, who are strong against themselves." Strong were they who said, *We ought to obey God rather than men*,[4] and, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors*

[1] נְדֻחָה is used with the same image of the dispersed flock, Zeph. iii. 19; Ezek. xxxiv. 4, 16; and הִדִּיחוּ, Jer. l. 17.

[2] lx. 22. [3] Gloss. [4] Acts v. 29.

the LORD [a] shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever.

[a] Isa. ix. 6, and xxiv. 23; Dan. vii. 14, 27; Luke i. 33; Rev. xi. 15.

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through Him that loved us.[1] God does not only restore in the Gospel; He multiplies exceedingly. "I will so clothe her with the spirit of might, that, as she shall be fruitful in number, so shall she be glorious in victories, so that of her it shall be said, [2] *Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as* an army *with banners?*" [3] For, not to name those, whose whole life is one warfare against invisible enemies and the evil desires of the flesh, who shall count the martyrs of Christ? We know that that *remnant* and *strong nation* owe wholly to grace all which they are, as they themselves in the Revelation give thanks: *Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy Blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth;* [4] that same Lord, of Whom it is here said,

The Lord shall reign over them in Zion from henceforth even for ever. The visible kingdom of God in Judah was often obscured, kings, princes, priests, and false prophets combining to encourage one another in rebellion against God. In the captivity it even underwent an almost total eclipse by the overshadowing of earthly power, save when the Divine light flashed forth for an instant in the deeds or words of power and wisdom, related by Daniel. *Henceforth*, i.e. from the time when *the law* should *go forth out of Zion*, God should *indeed* reign, and that kingdom should have no end.

[1] Rom. viii. 35, 37.
[2] Cant. vi. 10.
[3] Rup.
[4] Rev. v. 9, 10.

8 ¶ And thou, O tower of *the flock, the strong

* Or, *Edar :* Gen. xxxv. 21.

8. *And thou, O tower of the flock.* "'Tower of Ader,' which is interpreted 'tower of the flock,' about 1000 paces (a mile) from Bethlehem," says S. Jerome,[1] who lived there, "and foresignifying [in its very name] by a sort of prophecy the shepherds at the Birth of the Lord." There Jacob fed his sheep,[2] and there (since it was hard by Bethlehem) the shepherds, keeping watch over their flocks by night, saw and heard the angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men." The Jews inferred from this place that the Messiah should be revealed there.[3]

Stronghold [Ophel [4]] *of the daughter of Zion.* Ophel was a strong place in the south of Jerusalem, the last which the

[1] De loc. Hebr. Arculf, A.D. 670, found "a Church of the Shepherds," a mile from Bethlehem. Early Trav. in Pal., p. 6. The Midgal Edar is mentioned also in the Mass. Shekalim, c. 7, 4. "Of the herds, in the space between Jerusalem and 'the tower of the flock' and on both sides, the males are for burnt-offerings, the female for peace-offerings. R. Jehuda says, whatever male animals are found (there) thirty days before the passover fit for it, are to be used thereto," in Sepp, Heil. Land, ii. 470.

[2] Gen. xxxv. 21.

[3] Ps. Jon. on Gen. xxxv. 21. "This is the place, where in the last days Messiah shall be revealed."

[4] Ophel, like many other Hebrew proper names, did not lose its original appellative meaning, and so in the six places, where it occurs in the prose books, keeps the article; 2 Chron. xxvii. 3; xxxiii. 14; Neh. iii. 26, 27; xi. 21; and 2 Kings v. 24, in which last place it may very possibly be a place in Samaria, named after that in Jerusalem. It occurs without the article here and Isa. xxxii. 14, and in Josephus, Ὄφλας. The E.V. retains the word as a proper name in the historical books, 2 Chron. and Neh.

hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it

wall, enclosing Zion, reached, before, or as, it touched on the eastern porch of the temple,[1] with whose service it was connected. We know that, after the captivity, the Nethinim, who did the laborious service of the temple, dwelt there.[2] It lay very near to the priests' district.[3] It was probably a lower acclivity, "swelling out" (as its name seems to mean[4]) from the mountain of the temple. In the last war, it was held together with "the temple, and the adjoining parts to no slight extent, and the valley of Kedron."[5] It was burnt[6] before the upper city was taken. It had been encircled by a wall of old; for Jotham "built greatly *upon* its wall."[7] Manasseh "encircled it"[8] (probably with an outer wall) "and raised it exceedingly," i.e. apparently raised artificially the whole level.

Yet, as a symbol of all Jerusalem, Ophel is as remarkable, as the "tower of the flock" is as to Bethlehem. For Ophel, although fortified, is nowhere spoken of as of any account.[9]

[1] "The oldest wall was hard to be taken on account of the ravines, and the ridge above them on which it was built.—On the west—turning to the S. over the Pool of Siloam, and then again bending eastward to Solomon's Pool, and extending to a place which they call Ophlas, it was joined on to the eastern porch of the temple." Jos. B. J. v. 4, 2.

[2] Neh. iii. 26; xi. 21. [3] Ib. iii. 28.

[4] Like *tum*ulus from *tumeo* (Fürst). It is used of a local tumour in Arab. and in Deut. xxviii. 27; 1 Sam. v. 6, 12; vi. 4, 5; and of the swelling of pride, Num. xiv. 44; Hab. ii. 4.

[5] By John. Jos. B. J. v. 6, 1.

[6] Together with "the archive, Acra, the Council-hall," Ib. vi. 6, 3, after the destruction of the temple, Ib. xi. 4, 5–7.

[7] 2 Chron. xxvii. 3. [8] Ib. xxxiii. 14.

[9] Josephus calls it, "that which was called Ophlas," B. J. v. 4, 2; vi. 6, 3.

It is not even mentioned in the circuit of the walls, at their dedication under Nehemiah[1]—probably as an outlying spot. It was probably of moment chiefly, as giving an advantage to an enemy who might occupy it.

Both, then, are images of lowliness. The lonely Shepherd-tower, for Bethlehem, the birthplace of David; Ophel for Jerusalem, of which it was yet but an outlying part, and deriving its value probably as an outwork of the temple. Both symbols anticipate the fuller prophecy of the littleness, which shall become great in God. Before the mention of the greatness of the *dominion to come*, is set forth the future poverty to which it should come. In lowliness Christ came, yet is indeed a Tower protecting and defending the sheep of His pasture, founded on earth in His Human Nature, reaching to Heaven in His Divine; *a strong Tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*[2]

Unto thee shall it come (lit. *unto thee shall it come*,[3] *and there shall arrive*, &c.). He saith not at first what shall come, and so raises the soul to think of the greatness of that which should come. The soul is left to fill up what is more than thought can utter. *Unto thee* (lit. *quite up to thee*[4]). No hindrances should withhold it from coming. Seemingly it was a great way off, and they in a very hopeless state. He suggests the difficulty even by his strength of assurance. One could not say, *it shall come quite up to thee*, of that which in the way of nature would readily come to any one. But amid all hindrances God's might makes its way, and brings His gifts and promises to their end. *And there shall arrive.* He twice repeats the assurance, in equivalent words, for their fuller assurance, "to make the good tidings the gladder by repeating and enforcing them."[5]

[1] Neh. xii. 31–40. [2] Prov. xviii. 10.
[3] The Masorethes seem rightly to have marked this by the accents. [4] עָרֹיךְ. [5] Rup.

come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.

The first, or *former*, *dominion*. The word often stands, as our "former,"[1] in contrast with the "later." It is not necessarily *the first*, strictly; and so here, not the *dominion* of David and Solomon exclusively. Rather the Prophet is placed in spirit in the later times when the kingdom should be suspended, and foretells that *the former dominion*, i.e. that of the line of David, should come to her, not in its temporal greatness, but the line itself. So the Angel said, *He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever*.[2]

The [*A*] *kingdom to the daugher of Jerusalem*, i.e. a kingdom, which should not be *of* her, but which should come *to* her; not hers by right, but by *His* right, Who should merit it for her, and, being King of kings, makes His own, *kings and priests unto God and His Father*.[3]

The Jews themselves seem to have taken these words into their own mouths, just before they rejected Him, when they hoped that He would be a king, such as they wished for. *Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh in the Name of the Lord*.[4] And in a distorted form, they held it even afterwards.[5]

[1] So, the *former* time (Isa. viii. 23), *deeds* (2 Chron. ix. 29; xvi. 11; xx. 34), *king* (Num. xxi. 26), *tables* (Exod. xxxiv. 1), *benefits* (Ps. lxxxix. 50), *days* (Deut. iv. 32; x. 10), *kings* (Jer. xxxiv. 5), *prophets* (Zech. i. 4; vii. 7, 12), *temple* (Ezra iii. 12; Hag. ii. 3, 9). See Ges. Thes., p. 1251.

[2] S. Luke i. 32, 33. [3] Rev. i. 6. [4] S. Mark xi. 10.

[5] Targ. "And thou, O Messiah of Israel, who art hid on account of the sins of the congregation of Israel, to thee the kingdom will come," giving to עֹפֶל the sense of אוֹפֶל (as

9 Now why dost thou cry out aloud? [a] *is there* no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for [b] pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail.

[a] Jer. viii. 19.
[b] Isa. xiii. 8 and xxi. 3; Jer. xxx. 6 and l. 43.

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9. *Now.* The Prophet places himself in the midst of their deepest sorrows, and out of them he promises comfort. *Why dost thou cry out aloud? is there no King in thee? is thy Counsellor perished?*[1] Is then all lost, because thou hast no visible king, none to counsel thee or consult for thee?[1] Very remarkably he speaks of their *King* and *Counsellor* as one, as if to say, "When all besides is gone, there is One Who abides. Though thou be a captive, God will not forsake thee. When thou hadst no earthly king, *the Lord thy God* was *thy King*.[2] He is the First, and He is the Last. When thou shalt have no other, He thy King, ceaseth not to be." "Thou shouldest not fear, so long as He, Who counselleth for thee, liveth; but He liveth for ever."[3] Thy *Counsellor*, He, Who is called *Counsellor*,[4] Who counselleth for thee, Who counselleth thee, will, if thou obey His counsel, make birth-pangs to end in joy.

For pangs have taken thee, as a woman in travail, resistless, remediless, doubling the whole frame, redoubled until the end, for which God sends them, is accomplished, and then ceasing in joy. The truest comfort, amid all sorrow, is in owning that the travail-pains must be, but that the reward shall be afterwards. "It is meet to look for

in the LXX. Vulg. Aq. Symm., Syr.), and thence obtaining the sense "hidden," in reference to their fable that He was born before the destruction of the temple and hidden by God.

[1] Comp. Hosea xiii. 10.
[2] 1 Sam. xii. 12.
[3] Mont.
[4] Isa. ix. 6.

10 Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go *even* to Babylon;

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deliverance from God's mercy, as certainly as for punishment from our guilt; and that the more, since He who foretold both, willingly saves, punishes unwillingly."[1] So the Prophet adds,

10. *Be in pain, and labour to bring forth* (lit. *Writhe and burst forth*), as if to say, "thou *must* suffer, but thy suffering and thy joy shall be one. Thou canst not have the joy without the suffering. As surely as thou sufferest, thou shalt have joy. In all sorrow, lose not faith and hope, and *thou shalt be sorrowful, but thy sorrow shall be turned into joy.*"[2] "Good daughter, be very patient in the pangs, bear up against your sorrows,"[3] so shall the birth be nigh. Yet for the time she must *go forth out of the city* into captivity. *And thou shalt dwell in the field*, houseless, under tents, as captives were wont to be kept, until all were gathered together to be led away; a sore exchange for her former luxury, and in requital of their oppression.[4]

And thou shalt go even to Babylon. Not Babylon, but Assyria was the scourge of God in Micah's time. Babylon was scarcely known, *a far country.*[5] Yet Micah is taught of God to declare that thither shall the two tribes be carried captive, although the ten were carried captive by Assyria. *There*[6] *shalt thou be delivered, there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand*[7] *of thine enemies.* God's judgments, or purifying trials, or visitation of His saints, hold

[1] Mont.
[2] S. John xvi. 20.
[3] S. Cyr.
[4] Amos vi.; Micah ii. 8, 9.
[5] 2 Kings xx. 14.
[6] See on Hosea ii. 15.
[7] Lit. "the hollow of the hand," and so "the grasp."

there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.

11 ¶ [a] Now also many nations are gathered against

[a] Lam. ii. 16.

their way, until their end be reached. They who suffer them cannot turn them aside; they who inflict them cannot add to them or detain them. The prison-house is the place of deliverance to Joseph and S. Peter; the Red Sea to Israel; the judges were raised up, when Israel was mightily oppressed; Jabesh-Gilead was delivered when the seventh day was come;[1] the walls of Jerusalem were the end of Sennacherib; Judah should have long been in the very hand and grasp of Babylon, yet must its clenched *hand* be opened.

11. *Now also* [*And now*]. The Prophet had already spoken of the future before them, with this word *Now*. Then, he distinctly prophesied the captivity to Babylon. Twice more he begins anew; as Holy Scripture, so often, in a mystery, whether speaking of evil or of good, of deliverance or of punishment, uses a threefold form. In these two, no mention is made of the enemy and so there is some uncertainty. But the course must apparently be either backwards or forwards. They must either be two nearer futures before the Captivity, or two more distant after it. This second gathering might, in itself, either be that of the Assyrian hosts under Sennacherib out of all the nations subject to him; or that of the many petty nations in the time of the Maccabees, who took advantage of the Syrians' oppression, to combine to eradicate the Jews.[2] If understood of Sennacherib, the Prophet having foretold the entire captivity of the whole people to Babylon, would have prophesied the sudden destruction of a nearer enemy,

[1] 1 Sam. xi. 3, 10, 11. [2] 1 Macc. v. 1, 2.

thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye [a] look upon Zion.

[a] Obad. 12; Micah vii. 10.

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whose miraculous and instantaneous overthrow should be the earnest of the destruction of Babylon and of their deliverance from it. This would suit well with the description, *He shall gather them as sheaves to the floor*, and would correspond well with the descriptions in Isaiah. On the other hand, whereas *this* description would suit any other event in which man gathered his strength against God and was overthrown, the following words, *Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion*, &c., fit better with the victories of the Maccabees, in which Israel was active, than with the overthrow of Sennacherib, in which they were wholly passive, and God did all for them, as Isaiah and Nahum foretell the same overthrow.[1] Then also, if the course of the description was backward, (1) the captivity in Babylon, (2) the destruction of Sennacherib, there is no earlier event to correspond with *the smiting of the judge of Israel on the cheek*.[2] The malice also of the nations gathered against Zion suits better with the abiding character of the petty nations, and with their hereditary envy against Israel and its high claims. To Nineveh and Babylon, Israel was but one little corner of ground, which rounded their territory and connected them with Egypt. They disdained them, even while they sought to subdue them. Micah describes the exultation of petty gratified rivalry.

That say, Let her be defiled. The bad have a keen eye for the haltings and inconsistencies and falls of God's people, for which they are ever on the watch. Like Satan, they

[1] Isa. x. 24–34; xiv. 24, 25; xvii. 12–14; xxix. 7, 8; Nahum i. 10–13.

[2] v. 1–4, Heb.

12 But they know not [a] the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them [b] as the sheaves into the floor.

[a] Isa. lv. 8; Rom. xi. 33. [b] Isa. xxi. 10.

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are first tempters, then the accusers; first desecrators, then sanctimonious justiciaries. God, in His judgment, leaves what has been inwardly defiled to be outwardly profaned. *If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple are ye.*[1] *The faithful city had become a harlot.*[2] *The land had become polluted by its inhabitants.*[3] Now it was to be polluted by the enemy. Its seducers ask for the judgment of God. "It has become like us in its deeds; let it no more be distinguished from us by the name of the people of God."

And let our eye look upon Zion, with pleasure upon its desolation, and feed itself with its misery. "Where the eye, there love; where the hand, there pain."[4] *They opened their mouth wide against me: they said, Aha, Aha, our eye hath seen.*[5] The world hates the Church; Edom, Israel; it cannot be satisfied with beholding its chastisements.[6] The sufferings of the martyrs were the choice spectacle of the heathen.

12. *But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel.* The heathen did, for their own ends, what God willed for His. The first step was the same; God willed that His people should be punished; they willed to punish them. But all which lay beyond, they saw not: that God willed (on their repentance) to

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 7. [2] Isa. i. 21.
[3] Jer. iii. 9; Ps. cvi. 38; Isa. xxiv. 5.
[4] Proverb in Lap. [5] Ps. xxxv. 21.
[6] Micah vii. 10; Obad. 12.

13 [a] Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I

[a] Isa. xli. 15, 16; Jer. li. 33.

pardon His own people, but to punish themselves for their pride[1] and cruelty.[2] "Almighty God corrects the elect through the reprobate, as with a rod; after which He condemns the reprobate eternally, as when the son has been disciplined, the rod is cast into the fire."[3]

For he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. The multitude of the sheaves hinders not the threshing; the multitude of God's enemies hinders not their destruction. They think that they strengthen themselves, as they gather together; God sees them but as ripened and fitted for destruction, gathered into one bundle together, to perish together. God gathers them, not by constraint or force, but by giving free scope to their own wayward wills, and overruling these to His ends.

13. *Arise* (it may be) from the dust in which they were lying, *I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass.* Threshing in the east is partly with oxen, partly with wheels of iron, or with planks set with sharp flints on an open place made hard to this end. The Prophet joins another image with this, and represents Judah as being by God endued with strength, first as with a *horn* of *iron*[4] to cast the enemy to the ground, and then with *hoofs* of *brass*, wherewith to trample them to dust, as the stubble and chaff. *And I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord*, i.e. to Myself; the Lord gathered them into the floor by His Providence; the Lord gave His people strength to subdue them; and now, in His own Person, He says, I will complete My own work.

The very image of the "threshing" implies that this is no

[1] Isa. x. 7, 12.
[2] Zech. i. 15, 19.
[3] Dion.
[4] 1 Kings xxii. 11.

will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs

mere destruction. While the stubble is *beaten* or bruised to small pieces, and the chaff is far more than the wheat, and is carried out of the floor, there yet remains the seed-corn. So in the great judgments of God, while most is refuse, there yet remains over, what is severed from the lost heap and wholly *consecrated* to Him. Whatever things were the object of the "Cherem"[1] or "thing devoted to the Lord," could not be redeemed, but must remain wholly the Lord's. If it had life, it was to be put to death.[2] And so the use of the word here may the rather show, how those converted to God, and who became *gain*, hallowed to Him, were to pass through death to life, to die to themselves that they might live to Him: what was evil was to be slain in them, that they themselves might live.

The Israelites and God's dealings with them are *ensamples of us upon whom the ends of the world are come*.[3] And so the whole section fits wonderfully with the condition of the single soul.

She who halteth is "the soul, who would serve God, yet not so as wholly to give up the service of the world, which it had in Baptism renounced, who, after it had gone astray like a lost sheep, and been scattered amid the manifoldness of earthly things, was gathered again into the fold, to love One only, long for One only, give itself to One,"[4] its Good Shepherd, and over it the Lord reigneth for ever, if, taught by experience the deceitfulness of Satan's promises, and stung by the sense of its own thanklessness and vileness, and conscious of the peril of self-confidence, it abideth more closely than others with God. *He shall gather her that is driven out*, i.e. "He shall restore her, from whom He had, for the time, withdrawn His grace,"[5] *and her that*

[1] Lev. xxvii. 28. [2] Ib. xxvii. 29.
[3] 1 Cor. x. 11. [4] Rib. [5] Dion.

brass: and thou shalt [a] beat in pieces many people:

[a] Dan. ii. 44.

was afflicted, trouble being God's most effectual instrument in recalling the soul to Himself. "For *the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down.*[1] *And will make her that halteth, a remnant*, placing her among the elect and holy, *and her that was cast off strong;* for Christ giveth oft to such souls great richness of Divine graces, so that *where sin abounded, grace* should *much more abound.*" [2] "To it, when enlightened and purified by affliction and by repentance, it is promised, that its Lord, the Great King, shall come to it, and again reign in it, which is the great bliss of souls in grace. For then doth the soul really reign, when it submits wholly to Christ, Whom to serve is to reign, and so, under Him, receives power to command its wrong desires, and rule itself;" [3] that great and wonderful power which the Evangelist expresses in words so brief, *To them gave He power to become the sons of God.*[4] Thus He *maketh it strong*, so that *neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers*, can *separate it from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*[5] Then, "he describes the condition of the soul fluctuating between good and evil, called one way by God through inward inspirations, and another way by the enticements and habits of sin. And, wishing to follow God, yet not to be without its sinful pleasures, and knowing this to be impossible, it is in anguish and hesitates. Her the Prophet justly rebukes: *Why thus cry aloud*, as though thou must be led captive by the Devil, not knowing or unable to extricate thyself? *Hast thou no King*, aided by Whose power, thou mayst fight against all enticements, habit, the flesh? Paul felt this and cried aloud, *I see another law in my members, warring*

[1] Ps. cxlvi. 8. [2] Rom. v. 20. [3] Rib.
[4] S. John i. 12. [5] Rom. viii. 38, 39.

[a] and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD,

[a] Isa. xviii. 7, xxiii. 18, and lx. 6, 9.

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against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?[1] You see his grief. But he despairs not. He knows that he has *a King. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Or why grievest thou, as if thou hadst no *counsellor*, by whose counsels to free thee from these snares? *Thy Counsellor* indeed *perished* on the Cross, but for thy sake, that thou mayest live. He died, to destroy him who hath the power of death. But He rose the third day and is still with thee; at the Right Hand of the Father He still reigns Immortal for ever. See how many counsels He has left thee in the Gospel, how many admonitions, whereby thou mayest lead a happy and tranquil life. Now *pain seizes thee like a woman in travail.* For such a soul *travails*, having conceived inspirations from God, which it wishes to obey, but that the flesh, overcome by concupiscence, resists, and so it never brings forth, nor experiences that joy, whereof the Lord speaketh, *When she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.*[2] Wherefore he adds: *be in pain*, for thou art indeed in travail; thou wilt not cease to be in pain, until thou bring forth. *Thou wilt go forth*, &c. "God, by a provision of His great mercy, allows lukewarm souls, who will be at no pains to gain grace, to fall into foulest sins, in order that, owning at last their misery, they may cease to be lukewarm, and with great ardour of soul may embrace virtue. For, warned by the result, they understand that they themselves emboldened the tempter (for he chiefly attacks the lukewarm and remiss), and they become ardent

[1] Rom. vii. 23, 24. [2] S. John xvi. 21.

and their substance unto [a] the Lord of the whole earth.

[a] Zech. iv. 14 and vi. 5.

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in the conflict and in well-doing."[1] Wherefore he says, *Thou shalt go forth out of the city*, that City of God, whereof He *is the Builder and Maker*,[2] which is gladdened by the river of His Spirit; "and it dwells in the open field, unprotected, ready to be a prey, in the broad way of its own concupiscences, out of *the narrow road which leadeth to life, and goeth even to Babylon*, the city of 'confusion,' in tumult and din and unrest, and the distractions of this life." Yet even there shall it be delivered, like the poor Prodigal, who came to himself in a far country, when worn out by its hard service. Even there it must not despair, but remember, with him, its Father's house, its former home, the Heavenly Jerusalem. Its pains within or without, whereby it is brought back, are travail-pains. Though all is dark, it must not say, *I have no Counsellor*. For its Redeemer's Name is *Counsellor*,[3] "one Counsellor of a thousand."[4] "Thine Intercessor never dies."[5] Out of the very depth of misery will the Divine Mercy draw thee. Though thou seem held by the strong hand of the enemy, and he seems to triumph over thee and to jeer thee, *There, there, so would we have it, we have devoured him*,[6] and hosts of devils seek thy utter destruction, and thou seem to be *delivered over* to them *to the destruction of the flesh;* yet is it only *that the spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord*.[7] Even Satan, when he is tormenting souls, *knows not the thoughts of the Lord, nor understands His counsels*, how, by the very pain which he inflicts, God is bidding them, *Rise* and "look up

[1] Rib. [2] Heb. xi. 10. [3] Isa. ix. 6.
[4] Ecclus. vi. 6. [5] Christian Year.
[6] Ps. xxxv. 25. [7] 1 Cor. v. 5.

CHAPTER V

1 *The birth of Christ.* 4 *His kingdom.* 8 *His conquest.*

Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops:

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to heaven and long for heavenly things and trample on all which they had hitherto foully served, honour or vain-glory or covetousness or lust;"[1] how He will *exalt their horn in the Lord, make* it strong as *iron* that they should *do all things through Christ in strengthening them*, and conquer all through the might of Christ; how He should *bruise Satan under their feet shortly*, and they consecrate wholly to God their whole strength, every power of soul and body which hitherto had been the adversary's.

CHAP. V. ver. 1. *Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops.* The *daughter of troops* is still the same who was before addressed, Judah. The word is almost always[2] used of "bands of men employed in irregular, marauding inroads." Judah is entitled *daughter of troops*, on account of her violence, the robbery and bloodshed within her,[3] as Jeremiah says, *Is this house which is called by My Name become a den of robbers in your eyes?*[4] She then who *had spoiled*[5] should now be *spoiled;* she who had formed herself in bands to lay waste, shall now be gathered thick together,

[1] Rib.

[2] i.e. except Job xxv. 3 (where it is used of the armies of God) and Job xxix. 25. In Job xix. 5, it is used metaphorically of the "host" of evils sent against Job. S. Jerome renders "filia latronis," and says that Aq. Symm. Theod. and Ed. V. agree with that rendering.

[3] ii. 8; iii. 2, &c.; Hosea v. 10.

[4] Jer. vii. 11; comp. S. Matt. xxi. 13.

[5] Isa. xxxiii. 1.

he hath laid siege against us: they shall [a] smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.

[a] Lam. iii. 30; Matt. v. 39 and xxvii. 30.

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in small bands,[1] unable to resist in the open field; yet in vain should she so gather herself; for the enemy was upon her, in her last retreat.

This description has obviously no fulfilment, except in the infliction by the Romans. For there was no event, *before* the invasion by Sennacherib and accordingly in the Prophet's own time, in which there is any seeming fulfilment of it. But then, the second deliverance must be that by the Maccabees; and this siege, which lies, in order of time, beyond it, must be a siege by the Romans. With this it agrees that whereas, in the two former visitations, God promised, in the first, deliverance, in the second, victory, here the Prophet dwells on the Person of the Redeemer, and foretells that the strength of the Church should not lie in any human means.[2] Here too Israel had no *king*, but a *judge* only. Then the "gathering in robber-bands" strikingly describes their internal state in the siege of Jerusalem; and although this was subsequent to and consequent upon the rejection of our Lord, yet there is no reason why the end should be separated from the beginning since the capture by Titus was but the sequel of the capture by Pompey, the result of that same temper in which they crucified Jesus, because He would not be their earthly king. It was the close of the organic existence of the former people; after which the *remnant*

[1] תתנודדי and בת גדוד are manifestly to be taken in corresponding senses. That of "gathering in troops" is the only known sense of התנודד, Jer. v. 7, except that of "making incisions in one's flesh," which is obviously irrelevant here.

[2] v. 8–15.

2 But thou, [a] Beth-lehem Ephratah, *though* thou

[a] Matt. ii. 6; John vii. 42.

from among them with the Gentiles, not Israel after the flesh, were the true people of God.

He hath laid siege against us. The Prophet, being born of them, and for the great love he bore them, counts himself among them, as S. Paul mourns over his brethren after the flesh. *They shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.* So S. Paul said to him who had made himself high-priest, *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law.*[1] It is no longer "the king" (for they had said, *We have no King but Cæsar*[2]) but *the judge of Israel*, they who against Christ and His Apostles gave wrong judgment. As they had smitten contrary to the law, so were the chief men smitten by Titus when the city was taken. As they had done, it was done unto them. To be smitten on the face betokens shame; to smite with the rod betokens destruction. Now both shall meet in one; as, in the Great Day, the wicked *shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt*,[3] and shall *perish for ever*.

2. *But* [*And*] *thou, Bethlehem Ephratah.* With us, the chequered events of time stand in strong contrast, painful or gladdening. Good seems to efface evil, or evil blots out the memory of the good. God orders all in the continuous course of His Wisdom. All lies in perfect harmony in the Divine Mind. Each event is the sequel of what went before. So here the Prophet joins on, what to us stands in such contrast, with that simple *And*. Yet he describes the two conditions as bearing on one another. He had just spoken of *the judge of Israel* smitten on the cheek, and before,[4] that Israel had neither *king* nor *counsellor;*

[1] Acts xxiii. 3.
[2] S. John xix. 15.
[3] Dan. xii. 2.
[4] iv. 9.

be little [a] among the [b] thousands of Judah, *yet* out

[a] 1 Sam. xxiii. 23. [b] Exod. xviii. 25.

he now speaks of *the Ruler in Israel*, the Everlasting. He had said, how Judah was to become mere *bands* of men; he now says, how the *little Bethlehem* was to be exalted. He had said before, that the *rule of old* was to come to *the tower of the flock, the daughter of Jerusalem;* now, retaining the word,[1] he speaks of the Ruler, in Whom it was to be established. Before he had addressed *the tower of the flock;* now *Bethlehem.* But he has greater things to say now, so he pauses,[2] *And thou!* People have admired the brief appeal of the murdered Cæsar, "Thou too, Brutus." The like energetic conciseness lies in the words, *And thou! Bethlehem Ephratah.* The name Ephratah is not seemingly added in order to distinguish Bethlehem from the Bethlehem of Zabulon, since *that* is but once named,[3] and Bethlehem here is marked to be the *Bethlehem Judah*,[4] by the addition, *too little to be among the thousands of Judah.* He joins apparently the usual name, *Bethlehem*, with the old patriarchal, and perhaps poetic[5] name, *Ephratah*, either in reference and contrast to that former birth of sorrow near Ephratah,[6] or (as is Micah's wont) regarding the meaning of both names. Both its names were derived from "fruitfulness"; "House of Bread" and "fruitfulness"; and, despite of centuries of Mohammedan oppression, it is fertile still.[7]

[1] ממשלת iv. 8, מושל v. 1, Heb.

[2] As marked by the accent, "double Garesh." Casp.

[3] Joshua xix. 15.

[4] Its name in Judges xvii. 7–9; xix. 1, 2, 18; Ruth i. 1, 2, 1 Sam. xvii. 12.

[5] Ps. cxxxii. 6. [6] Gen. xxxv. 19; xlviii. 7.

[7] "The district country around Bethlehem abounds in fields, vineyards, hills, valleys, olive-yards, fig-trees, and is

It had been rich in the fruitfulness of this world; rich, thrice rich, should it be in spiritual fruitfulness. "[1] Truly is Bethlehem, 'house of bread,' where was born [2]*the Bread of life, which came down from heaven*," "[3] Who with inward sweetness refreshes the minds of the elect," [4]*Angel's Bread*, and "[1] Ephratah, fruitfulness, whose fruitfulness is God," the Seed-corn, stored wherein, died and *brought forth much fruit*, all which ever was brought forth to God in the whole world.

Though *thou be little among the thousands of Judah*, lit. *small to be*, i.e. *too small to be among*, &c. Each tribe was divided into its thousands, probably of fighting men, each thousand having its own separate head.[5] But the thousand continued to be a division of the tribe, after Israel was settled in Canaan.[6] The *thousand* of Gideon was *the meanest in Manasseh*.[7] Places too small to form a thousand by themselves were united with others to make up the number.[8] So lowly was Bethlehem that it was not counted among the possessions of Judah. In the division under

especially supported by wines and corn" (Quaresm. Elucid. Terræ S. ii. 620). "Round the hill is fruitful garden and corn land" (Russegger, iii. 79). "The terraces, admirably kept, and covered with rows of luxuriant olives, intermixed with the fig and vine, sweep in graceful curves round the ridge, regular as stairs" (Porter, Handbook, p. 206). "It is still one of the best cultivated and most fertile parts of Palestine" (Rev. G. Williams in Smith's Gr. and R. Geogr. Add Volney, ii. 298).

[1] In Vit. S. Jer. Ep. 108, de Vit. Paulæ, n. 10.

[2] S. John vi. 48, 51.

[3] S. Greg. Hom. 8, in Ev.

[4] Ps. lxxviii. 25.

[5] Num. i. 16; x. 4.

[6] Joshua xxii. 21, 30; 1 Sam. x. 19; xxiii. 23.

[7] Judges vi. 15.

[8] As in 1 Chron. xxiii. 11, four brothers, not having many sons, were counted as one "house." Hengst.

of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be

Joshua it was wholly omitted.[1] From its situation, Bethlehem can never have been a considerable place. It lay and lies east of the road from Jerusalem to Hebron, at six miles from the capital.[2] It was "seated on the summit-level of the hili-country of Judæa, with deep gorges descending east to the Dead Sea and west to the plains of Philistia," [3] "2704 feet above the sea." [4] It lay "on a narrow ridge," [5] whose whole length was not above a mile,[5] swelling at each extremity into a somewhat higher eminence, with a slight depression between.[6] "The ridge projects eastward from the central mountain range, and breaks down in abrupt terraced slopes to deep valleys on the N.E. and S." [7] The west end too "shelves gradually

[1] Joshua xv. The LXX interpolate it in Joshua xv. 59.

[2] Eus. S. Jer. de loc. Hebr. "Six miles [in the sixth mile, S. Jer.] from Ælia to the south, near the road which leadeth to Hebron." Itin. Hieros. p. 598. "From Jerusalem, as you go to Bethlehem, on the high road at four miles on the right is the monument where Rachel, Jacob's wife, was buried. Thence two miles on the left is Bethlehem, where our Lord Jesus Christ was born." "Two parasangs" (six miles), Benj. Tud. (i. 40; ii. 90); "six miles," Arculf (Early Travels in Pal. p. 6), Bernard (Ib. 29), Sæwulf (Ib. 44); "two hours," Maundrell (Ib. 455), Robinson (i. 470).

[3] Thomson, The Land, ii. 509.

[4] Van de Velde, Memoir, p. 180; "convent at Bethlehem, 2704 Eng. feet" (Russ.).

[5] Arculf in Early Travels in Palestine, p. 6.

[6] Ritter, Erdk. xvi. 285, and Russ. in n. 15.

[7] Porter's Handbook, i. 207. "It stands upon an eminence surrounded by small valleys or depressions, devoted to the culture of the olive and vine."—"From this height there is a pretty steep slope on both the north and southern sides, particularly the former, the two Wadis or gorges which form its boundaries. On the flanks of these Wadis are the prin-

down to the valley." [1] It was then rather calculated to be an outlying fortress, guarding the approach to Jerusalem, than for a considerable city. As a garrison, it was fortified and held by the Philistines [2] in the time of Saul, recovered from them by David, and was one of the fifteen cities [3] fortified by Rehoboam. Yet it remained an unimportant place. Its inhabitants are counted with those of the neighbouring Netophah, both before [4] and after [5] the captivity, but both

cipal gardens, vineyards, and plantations of olives and figs. They unite a little to the E. of the town, and form what is called the Wadi-et-Taamarah from the village of Beit-Taamr, in the neighbourhood" (Wilson, Lands, i. 394). "A narrow ridge, surrounded on all sides by vallcys" (Arculf, Ib.). "On the N. the other side of the deep, abruptly-sinking valley, on the top of the hill, lay Bethlehem" (V. Schubert, ii. 493, coming from the south). "It stands on the slope of a hill, of difficult ascent, at least by night" (Lord Lindsay, p. 240). "The first sight of Bethlehem has something strangely picturesque. It lies quite on a bare summit in the Jura limestone of Palestine, 2338 Paris feet above the sea. The summit is divided by a shallow saddle-back. On the west side lies Bethlehem, on the east the great monastery and church, like a fortress over the precipice, which falls into the deep valley" (Russeger, iii. 79). "The little city of David, seated on a lofty hill, shines, like a brilliant crown, among the mountains of Judah" (Mislin. c. 32, iii. 6). "From one spot, you can see the Church of Bethlehem, where our Saviour was born; the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where He was buried; the Mount of Olives whence He ascended to heaven" (Id. Ib.).

[1] Grove in Smith Dict. of Bib. "Towards the W. the hill is higher than the village, and then sinks down very gradually towards Wadi Ahmed" (Rob. i. 470).

[2] 2 Sam. xxiii. 14.

[3] 2 Chron. xi. 6. "A low wall without towers surrounds the brow of the hill, and overlooks the valley" (Arculf, p. 6); "scarcely a quarter of an hour" (Ritter, p. 286).

[4] 1 Chron. ii. 54. [5] Neh. vii. 26.

[a] ruler in Israel; [b] whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from * everlasting.

[a] Gen. xlix. 10; Isa. ix. 6.
[b] Ps. xc. 2; Prov. viii. 22, 23; John i. 1.
* Heb. *the days of eternity.*

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together amounted after the captivity to 179[1] or 188[2] only. It still does not appear among the possessions of Judah.[3] It was called a city,[4] but the name included even places which had only 100 fighting men.[5] In our Lord's times it is called *a village*,[6] a *city*,[7] or a strong spot.[8] The royal city would become *a den of thieves.* Christ should be born in a lowly village. "He Who had taken the form of a servant, chose Bethlehem for His Birth, Jerusalam for His Passion."[9]

S. Matthew relates how the Chief Priest and Scribes in their answer to Herod's inquiries, *where Christ should be born*,[10] alleged this prophecy. They gave the substance rather than the exact words, and with one remarkable variation, *art not the least among the princes of Judah.* S. Matthew did not correct their paraphrase, because it does not affect the object for which they alleged the prophecy, the birth of the Redeemer in Bethlehem. The sacred writers often do not correct the translations, existing in their time, when the variations do not affect the truth.[11]

[1] Ezra ii. 21, 22. [2] Neh. vii. 26. [3] Neh. xi. 25–30.
[4] Ruth i. 19; Ezra ii. 1, with 21; Neh. vii. 6, with 26.
[5] Amos v. 3. [6] S. John vii. 42.
[7] S. Luke ii. 4. [8] Jos. Ant. v. 2, 8 (χώριον).
[9] S. Leo de Epiph. Serm. 1. [10] S. Matt. ii. 4–6.
[11] See on Amos ix. 12. Pococke has employed much learning to make this passage verbally accord with the allegation of it by the chief priest recorded by S. Matthew (Notæ miscell. on the Porta Mosis, Works, i. 134–139). He follows the eminent authority of Abulwalid (followed by

Both words are true here. Micah speaks of Bethlehem as it was in the sight of men; the chief priests, whose words S. Matthew approves, speak of it as it was in the sight of God, and as, by the Birth of Christ, it should become. "Nothing hindered that Bethlehem should be at once a small village and the Mother-city of the whole earth, as being the mother and nurse of Christ Who made the world

R. Tanchum and a Hebr. Arab. Gloss.) in supposing צעיר, "little," to have had the opposite sense of "great," and that it actually had that meaning in Jer. xlviii. 4; Zech. xiii. 7. In neither of those passages, however, have צעיר, צער, that meaning, nor do the cases alleged of words containing opposite meanings bear out such an one as this. For the two senses, although differing at last, can be traced up to one common source, which could not be done as to צעיר. Thus (1) קרש, "holy," is used of idolatrous consecrations which were in fact horrible desecrations (see on Hosea iv. 14). (2) נפש, "soul," is used of the "person," as we speak of "1000 souls." Thence the idiom נפשׁ מת, lit. "the soul of one dead" (Lev. xxi. 11; Num. vi. 6); then in one idiom טמא לנפש, "defiled as to the dead," but נפש does not signify one alive or dead indifferently. (3) ברך, lit. "bent the knee," prayed, includes prayers for evil as well as for good, cursing as well as blessing. (4) חסר, love, piety, hence perhaps, what is forbidden by natural piety (Lev. xx. 17), and a reproach (Prov. xiv. 34; Ib. xxv. 10); unless different roots have accidentally coalesced (see Fürst Conc.), as in שׂכל, to use "insight," hence wisdom, and סכל, vacillate, hence folly, meet in one Syriac word; or our *let*, "hinder," is from *lata*, "slow"; *latyan*, "retard"; Goth. our *let*, "allow," from "*letan*," i.q. lassen. In Arabic this is the more common on account of the severance of the different tribes who spoke it, before Mohammed united them into one, as the same word receives modifications in different languages of Europe. The meaning "great," also, if it could be obtained for צעיר, would still not yield the meaning desired. For להיות implies a comparison. It means *little to*

and conquered it." [1] "That is *not the least*, which is the house of blessing, and the receptacle of Divine grace." [2] "[3] He saith that the spot, although mean and small, shall be glorious. And in truth," adds S. Chrysostom, "the whole world came together to see Bethlehem, where, being born, He was laid, on no other ground than this only." "[4] O Bethlehem, little, but now made great by the Lord, He hath made thee great, Who, being great, was in thee made little. What city, if it heard thereof, would not envy thee that most precious Stable and the glory of that Crib? Thy name is great in all the earth, and *all generations call* thee *blessed. Glorious things are* everywhere *spoken of thee, thou city of God.*[5] Everywhere it is sung, that *this Man is born in her, and the Most High Himself shall stablish her.*"

Out of thee shall He come forth to Me that is to be Ruler in Israel [lit. shall (one) come forth to Me *to be Ruler*]. Bethlehem was too small to be any part of the polity of Judah; out of her was to come forth One, Who, in God's Will, was to be its Ruler. The words *to Me* include both *of Me* and *to Me. Of Me*, i.e. "by My Power and Spirit," [6] as Gabriel said, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that Holy Thing*

be in the thousands of Judah, i.e. too little. If צעיר were rendered *great*, it would still be "great to be among the thousands," &c., i.e. too great to be. Chald. LXX. Syr. and the Latin in S. Aug. de Civ. D. xviii. 30, give another explanation, *it is little that thou shouldest be.* This does not agree better with the words in S. Matthew, and is against the idiom. In this idiom (1) צעיר is not used, but mostly מעט, or נקל, Isa. xlix. 6, or קטן, 2 Sam. vii. 19; (2) the person spoken to is always expressed.

[1] S. Greg. Naz. Orat. 18, in patr. § 17.
[2] S. Ambr. Ep. 70, § 11.
[3] S. Chrys. Quod Christus sit Deus, § 3, i. 561.
[4] S. Bern. Serm. 1, in Vig. Nativ. § 4, i. 763.
[5] Ps. lxxxvii. 3. [6] Theoph.

which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.[1] *To Me*, as God said to Samuel, *I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have provided Me a king among his sons.*[2] So now, *one shall go forth* thence *to Me*, to do My Will, to My praise and glory, to reconcile the world unto Me, to rule and be Head over the true Israel, the Church. He was to *go forth out of* Bethlehem, as his native place;[3] as Jeremiah[4] says, *His noble shall be from him, and his ruler shall go forth out of the midst of him;*[5] and Zechariah, *Out of him shall come forth the corner-stone; out of him the nail, out of him the battle-bow, out of him every ruler together.*[6] Before, Micah had said to *the tower of Edar, Ophel of the daughter of Zion, the first rule shall come to thee;* now, retaining the word, he says to Bethlehem, *out of thee shall come one to be a ruler.*[7] *The judge of Israel had been smitten;* now there should *go forth out of* the little Bethlehem, One, not to be a judge only, but a *Ruler*.

Whose goings forth have been *from of old, from everlasting*, lit. *from the days of eternity*. *Going forth* is opposed to *going forth;* a *going forth out of* Bethlehem, to *a going forth from eternity;* a *going forth*, which then was still to come (the Prophet says, *shall go forth*), to a *going forth* which had been long ago, "not from the world but from the beginning, not in the days of time, but *from the days of eternity*. For *in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Same was in the beginning with God.*"[8]

[1] S. Luke i. 35. [2] 1 Sam. xvi. 1.

[3] When יצא is used of actual descent, it is in relation to the actual parent, to "go forth out of the womb," "out of the loins," "out of the bowels," "out of thee," Gen. xlvi. 26; Job i. 21; Jer. i. 5; Gen. xxxv. 11; xv. 4; xvii. 6; 2 Kings xx. 18; יצאי ירכו, יצא מבטן, מרחם, מחלצי, ממעי, ממך.

[4] xxx. 21. [5] מִשלו מקרבו יצא. [6] Zech. x. 4.

[7] מושל (v. 1, Heb.) refers back to הממשלה, iv. 8.

[8] S. John i. 1, 2.

In the end of the days, He was to go forth from Bethlehem; but, lest he should be thought then to have had His Being, the Prophet adds, His *goings forth are from everlasting*."[1] Here words, denoting eternity and used of the eternity of God, are united together to impress the belief of the Eternity of God the Son. We have neither thought nor words to conceive eternity; we can only conceive of time lengthened out without end. "True eternity is boundless life, all existing at once,"[2] or "duration without beginning and without end and without change."[3] The Hebrew names, here used, express as much as our thoughts can conceive or our words utter. They mean literally, *from afore* (i.e. look back as far as we can, that from which we begin is still "before"), "*from the days of that which is hidden*." True, that in eternity there are no divisions, no succession, but one everlasting "now"; one, as God, in whom it is, is One. But man can only conceive of Infinity of space as space without bounds, although God contains space, and is not contained by it; nor can we conceive of Eternity, save as filled out by time. And so God speaks after the manner of men, and calls Himself *the Ancient of Days*,[4] "being Himself the age and time of all things; before days and age and time,"[5] "the Beginning and measure of ages and of time." The word, translated *from of old*, is used elsewhere[6] of the eternity of God. *The God of before*[7] is a title chosen to express that He is *before* all things which He made. *Dweller of afore*[8] is a title, formed to shadow out His ever-present existence. Conceive any existence *afore* all which else you can conceive, go back

[1] Rup. [2] S. Anselm Monol. c. 24, L.
[3] Rich. Vict. de Trin. ii. 4, L. [4] Dan. vii. 9.
[5] Dionys. de Div. Nom. c. 10, x. 5. [6] Hab. i. 12.
[7] אלהי קדם, Deut. xxxiii. 27. So אל עולם, Gen. xxi. 33; Isa. xl. 28.
[8] ישב קדם, Ps. lv. 20.

afore and *afore* that; stretch out backward yet *before* and *before* all which you have conceived, ages *afore* ages, and yet *afore*, without end,—then and there God was. That *afore* was the property of God. Eternity belongs to God, not God to eternity. Any words must be inadequate to convey the idea of the Infinite to our finite minds. Probably the sight of God, *as He Is*, will give us the only possible conception of eternity. Still the idea of time prolonged infinitely, although we cannot follow it to infinity, shadows our eternal being. And as we look along that long vista, our sight is prolonged and stretched out by those millions upon millions of years, along which we can look, although even if each grain of sand or dust on this earth, which are countless, represented countless millions, we should be, at the end, as far from reaching to eternity as at the beginning. *The days of eternity* are only an inadequate expression, because every conception of the human mind must be so. Equally so is every other, *From everlasting to everlasting;*[1] *from everlasting;*[2] *to everlasting;*[3] *from the day,*[4] i.e. since the day was. For the word *from*, to our minds, implies time, and time is no measure of eternity. Only it expresses pre-existence, an eternal Existence backwards as well as forwards, the incommunicable attribute of God. But words of Holy Scripture have their full meaning, unless it appear from the passage itself that they have not. In the passages where the words *for ever*, *from afore*, do not mean eternity, the subject itself restrains them. Thus *for ever*, looking onward, is used of time, equal in duration with the being of whom it is written, as, *he shall be thy servant for ever*,[5] i.e. so long as he lives in the body. So when it is

[1] מעולם עד עולם, Ps. xc. 2; ciii. 17.

[2] מעולם, Ps. xciii. 2, and of Divine Wisdom, or God the Son, Prov. viii. 23.

[3] לעולם ישב, Ps. ix. 8; xxix. 10.

[4] מיום, Is. xliii. 13.

[5] Exod. xxi. 6.

said to the Son, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,*[1] it speaks of a kingdom which shall have no end. In like way, looking backwards, *I will remember Thy wonders from old,*[2] must needs relate to time, because they are marvellous dealings of God in time. So again, *the heavens of old*[3] stand simply contrasted with the changes of man. But *God of old*[4] is the Eternal God. *He that abideth of old*[5] is God enthroned from everlasting. In like manner the *goings forth* here, opposed to a *going forth* in time (emphatic words being moreover united together), are a going forth in eternity.

The word, *from of old,* as used of being, is only used as to the Being of God. Here too, then, there is no ground to stop short of that meaning; and so it declares the eternal *going-forth,* or Generation of the Son. The plural, *goings forth,* may here be used, either as words of great majesty,[6] "God" "Lord," "Wisdom," (i.e. Divine[6]) are plural; or because the Generation of the Son from the Father is an Eternal Generation, before all time, and now, though not in time, yet in eternity still. As then the Prophet saith, "*from* the *days* of eternity," although eternity has no parts, nor beginning, nor "*from,*" so he may say *goings forth* to convey, as we can receive it, a continual going-forth. We think of Eternity as unending, continual time; and so he may have set forth to us the Eternal Act of the *Going Forth* of the Son, as continual acts.

The Jews understood, as we do now, that Micah foretold that the Christ was to be born at Bethlehem, until they rejected Him, and were pressed by the argument. Not only did the chief priests formally give the answer, but, supposing our Lord to be of Nazareth, some who rejected Him

[1] Ps. xlv. 6. [2] Ib. lxxvii. 12. [3] Ib. lxviii. 34.
[4] Deut. xxxiii. 27. [5] ישב קדם, Ps. lv. 20.
[6] אלהים, אדני, קדשים, חכמות, Prov. i. 20; ix. 1.

employed the argument against him. *Some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?* [1] They knew of two distinct things: that Christ was (1) to be *of the seed of David;* and (2) *out of the town of Bethlehem.* Christians urged them with the fact that the prophecy could be fulfilled in no other than in Christ. "If He is not yet born, who is to go forth as a Ruler out of the tribe of Judah from Bethlehem (for he must needs come forth out of the tribe of Judah and from Bethlehem, but we see that now no one of the race of Israel has remained in the city of Bethlehem, and thenceforth it has been interdicted [2] that any Jew should remain in the confines of that country) —how then shall a Ruler be born from Judæa, and how shall he *come forth out of Bethlehem*, as the Divine volumes of the Prophets announce, when to this day there is no one whatever left there of Israel, from whose race Christ could be born?" [3] The Jews at first met the argument, by affirming that the Messiah *was* born at Bethlehem on the day of the destruction of the temple; [4] but was hidden for the sins of the people. This being a transparent fable, the Jews had either to receive Christ, or to give up the belief that He was to be born at Bethlehem. So they explained it, "The Messiah

[1] S. John vii. 41, 42.

[2] By Hadrian. See on Micah iii. 12. Reland, p. 647, understands this of a prohibition to approach Bethlehem itself.

[3] Tert. c. Jud. c. 13, R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emunah, in Wagenseil tela ignea Sat. p. 278, tries to evade it.

[4] See at length Martini Pugio fidei, ii. 6, f. 279, from the Jerusalem Talmud Berachoth [f. 5] and the old mystical books, Bereshith Rabba on Gen. xxx. 41, and the Echa R. on Lam. i. 16. (These last passages have been mutilated.) See also Schoettg. T. ii. p. 196, on Isa. lxvi. 7. The fable of His concealment occurs in Jonath. on Micah iv. 8, and in Trypho in S. Just. Dial. § 8.

3 Therefore will he give them up, until the time

shall go forth thence, because he shall be of the seed of David who was out of Bethlehem." But this would have been misleading language. Never did man so speak, that one *should be* born in a place, when only a remote ancestor had been born there. Micah does not say merely that His family came out of Bethlehem, but that He Himself should thereafter come forth thence. No one could have said of Solomon or of any of the subsequent kings of Judah, that they *should* thereafter come forth from Bethlehem, any more than they could now say, "one shall come forth from Corsica," of any future sovereign of the line of Napoleon III., because the first Napoleon was a Corsican; or to us, "one *shall come* out of Hanover," of a successor to the present dynasty, born in England, because George I. came from Hanover in 1714.

3. *Therefore*, since God has so appointed both to punish and to redeem, *He*, God, or the Ruler "Whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting," Who is God with God, *shall give them up*, i.e. withdraw His protection and the nearness of His Presence, *giving them up* (1) into the hands of their enemies. And indeed the far greater part never returned from the captivity, but remained, although willingly, in the enemy's land, outwardly shut out from the land of the promise and the hope of their fathers.[1] But also (2) all were, more than before, *given up*[2] to follow their own ways. God was less visibly present among them. Prophecy ceased soon after the return from the captivity, and many tokens of the nearness of God and means of His communications with them, the Ark and the Urim and Thummim were gone. It was a time of pause and waiting, wherein the ful-

[1] As in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17.
[2] Acts vii. 42; Rom. i. 24, 26, 28.

that [a] she which travaileth hath brought forth: then

[a] Micah iv 10.

ness of God's gifts was withdrawn, that they might look on to Him Who was to come. *Until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth*, i.e. until *the Virgin* who should *conceive and bear a Son and call His Name Emmanuel, God with us*,[1] shall give birth to *Him* Who shall save them. And then shall be redemption and joy and assured peace. God provides against the fainting of hearts in the long time before our Lord should come.

Then [*And*]. There is no precise mark of time such as our word *then* expresses. He speaks generally of what should be after the Birth of the Redeemer. *The remnant of His brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. The children of Israel* are the true Israel, *Israelites indeed*;[2] they who are such, not in name[3] only, but in deed and in truth. *His brethren* are plainly the brethren of the Christ; either because Jesus vouchsafed to be born *of the seed of David according to the flesh*,[4] and of them *as concerning the flesh Christ came, Who is over all, God blessed for ever*;[5] or as such

[1] Isa. vii. 14. The context requires, that the Mother here spoken of should be the Mother of the Messias. For the Birth is spoken of before (v. 2), and *his brethren*, אחיו, in this verse can be no other than the brethren of *Him* Who is so born. The evasion, that it is only a figure for the end of the travail, gives an unmeaning sense, for it would signify, "He shall give them up, until He cease to give them up." It is also contrary to the idiom; since in the O.T. travail pangs are an emblem of suffering, not of the subsequent joy, and Israel is spoken of, both before and after, unfiguratively: "He shall give *them* up" and as "the children of Israel," so that a figurative mention of them in between would be unsuited to the context.

[2] S. John i. 47.
[3] Rom. ix. 6, &c.
[4] Ib. i. 3.
[5] Ib. ix. 5.

[a] the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

[a] Micah iv. 7.

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as He makes and accounts and *is not ashamed to call, brethren*,[1] being sons of God by grace, as He is the Son of God by nature. As He says, *Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother;*[2] and, *My brethren are these who hear the word of God and do it.*[3] *The residue* of these, the Prophet says, shall *return to*, so as to be joined with,[4] *the children of Israel;* as Malachi prophesies, [5] *He shall bring back the heart of the fathers to* [6] *the children, and the heart of the children to* [6] *the fathers.* In the first sense, Micah foretells the continual inflow of the Jews to that true Israel who should first be called. All in each generation, who are the true Israel, shall

[1] Heb. ii. 11. [2] S. Matt. xii. 50. [3] S. Luke viii. 21.

[4] "על stands in its first meaning of 'place,' where one thing moves to another, and so abides on it"; Ewald, in Hengst. who quotes 2 Chron. xxx. 9, "when you return to (על) the Lord," and Mal. iii. 24, Heb. as to the religious meaning. So contrariwise, "they returned to (על) the iniquities of their forefathers" (Jer. xi. 10). In all the cases mentioned by Fürst (Conc. pp. 1109–11), the original idea "over" remains in some force; "the waters returned upon the Eg.," Exod. xiv. 26; "and they returned *unto* Pihahiroth" (encamping there), Num. xxxiii. 7; "man would return *to* the dust" (so as to dwell there), Job xxxiv. 15; "the dog returned *to* his vomit" (taking it up again), Prov. xxvi. 11; "the wind returneth to its circuits" (so as to rest where it began), Eccl. i. 6; "My prayer shall return *into* my bosom" (so as to rest there, or, from God in blessing upon himself), Ps. xxxv. 13. In Neh. iv. 6, חשובו עלינו, "return so as to be with us," the idiom is the same as in this place.

[5] Mal. iii. 24, Heb. [6] על

4 ¶ And he shall stand and * feed [a] in the strength

* Or, *rule.*

[a] Isa. xl. 11, and xlix. 10; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; Micah vii. 14.

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be converted, made one in Christ, saved. So, whereas, since Solomon, all had been discord, and at last the Jews were scattered abroad everywhere, all, in the true Prince of Peace, shall be one.[1] This has been fulfilled in each generation since our Lord came, and shall be yet further in the end, when they shall haste and pour into the Church, and so *all Israel shall be saved.*[2]

But "the promise of God was not only to Israel after the flesh, but *to all*"[3] also *that were afar off, even as many as the Lord our God should call.*[4] All these may be called *the remnant of His brethren*, even those that were, before, *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel* and *afar off*,[5] *but now, in Christ Jesus, made one* with them; all, brethren among themselves and to Christ their ruler. "[3] Having taken on Him their nature in the flesh, He is not ashamed to call them so, as the Apostle speaketh, confirming it out of the Psalm, where in the Person of Christ he saith, *I will declare Thy name unto My brethren.*"[6] There is no reason to take the name *brethren* here in a narrower sense than so to comprehend all *the remnant whom the Lord shall call*,[7] whether Jews or Gentiles. The word "brethren" in its literal sense includes both, and, as to both, the words were fulfilled.

4. *And He shall stand.* The Prophet continues to speak of personal acts of this Ruler Who was to be born. He was not to pass away, not to rule only by others, but by Himself. To *stand* is the attitude of a servant, as Jesus, although God and Lord of all, said of Himself, *He shall come forth and serve*

[1] See Hosea i. 11; Isa. xi. 10, &c.
[2] Rom. xi. 26.
[3] Poc.
[4] Acts ii. 39.
[5] Eph. ii. 12–14.
[6] Ps. xxii. 22.
[7] Joel ii. 32.

of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the

them;[1] *The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.*[2] *He shall stand* as a Shepherd,[3] to watch, feed, guard them, day and night; *He shall stand*, as S. Stephen saw Christ *standing on the Right Hand of God*,[4] "to succour all those who suffer for Him."[5] "For to sit belongs to one judging; to stand, to one fighting or helping."[6] *He shall stand*, as abiding, not to pass from them, as Himself saith, *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world:*[7] and He shall *feed* His flock by His Spirit, His Word, His Wisdom and doctrine, His example and life; yea by His own Body and Blood.[8] They whom He feedeth *lack nothing.*[9]

In the strength of the Lord. He Who feedeth them with Divine tenderness, shall also have Divine might, His Father's and His own, to protect them; as He saith, *My sheep hear My Voice, and I know them and they follow Me, neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand. My Father Which gave them Me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's Hand. I and My Father are One.*[10] *With authority*, it is said, *He commandeth even the unclean spirits and they come out.*[11] His feeding or teaching also was *with authority, and not as the scribes.*[12]

In the Majesty of the Name of the Lord His God, as S. John says, *We beheld His Glory, the Glory as of the Only-Begotten of His Father;*[13] and He saith, *All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth;*[14] so that the Divine Glory should shine through the Majesty of His teaching, the power of His Grace,

[1] S. Luke xii. 37. [2] S. Matt. xx. 28. [3] See Isa. lxi. 5.
[4] Acts vii. 55. [5] Collect for S. Stephen's Day.
[6] S. Greg. Hom. 29, in Evang. n. 7.
[7] S. Matt. xxviii. 20. [8] S. John vi. [9] Ps. xxiii. 1.
[10] S. John x. 27–30. [11] S. Luke iv. 36.
[12] S. Matt. vii. 29. [13] S. John i. 14.
[14] S. Matt. xxviii. 18.

upholding His own, and the splendour of the miracles wrought by Him and in His Name. *Of the Name of the Lord;* as He saith again, *Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy Name.*[1] "Whoever then is sent to feed His flock must *stand*, i.e. be firm and unshaken; feed, not sell, nor slay: and feed in might, i.e. in Christ."[2] *His God*, as our Lord Himself, as Man, saith, *Unto My Father, and your Father, and to My God and your God.*[3] But that Majesty He Himself wields, as no mere man can: He Himself is invested with it. "To ordinary kings God is strength,[4] or gives strength;[5] men have strength in God; this Ruler is clad in the strength of the Lord, that same strength, which the Lord hath, Whose is strength. Of Him, as Israel's King, the same is said as of the Lord, as King of the whole earth;[6] only that the strength of the Messiah is not His own, but the Lord's. He is invested with the strength of the Lord, because He is Man; as Man, He *can* be invested with the *whole* strength of the Lord, only because He is also God."[7]

And they shall abide (lit. *sit, dwell,* in rest and security and unbroken peace under Christ their Shepherd and their King; they shall not wander to and fro as heretofore. "*He*, their Shepherd, shall *stand; they* shall *sit*."[7] The word[8] is

[1] S. John xvii. 11, 12. [2] Theoph.

[3] S. John xx. 17. Lipmann, in Nizzachon, objects, that, "as God, He has no God; as Man, He is not from everlasting to everlasting," not knowing, as a Jew, the Divine Personality of our Lord, whence, He being "not two but one Christ" (Ath. Creed), both the attributes of His Divine and Human Nature can be said of Him (in Poc.). R. Tanchum owns that the Ruler here spoken of can, for His greatness, be no other than the Messiah (Ib.).

[4] Ps. xxviii. 7; cxl. 7. [5] 1 Sam. ii. 10.

[6] Ps. xciii. 1. [7] Casp. [8] יִשְׁבוּ.

LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now [a] shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

[a] Ps. lxxii. 8; Isa. lii. 13; Zech. ix. 10; Luke i. 32.

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the more emphatic, because it stands so absolutely. This will be a sitting or dwelling, which will indeed deserve the name. The original promise, so often forfeited by their disobedience, should be perfectly fulfilled: *And ye shall dwell in your land safely, and I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid.* [1] So Amos and Micah had before promised.[2] And this is the result of the greatness of the promised Ruler, as the like promise of the Psalm is rested on the immutability of God: *Thou art the Same, and Thy years shall have no end. The children of Thy servants shall dwell,*[3] *and their seed shall be established before Thee.*[4] For it follows,

For now (in the time which Micah saw as did Abraham with the eye of faith), *now*, in contrast to that former time of lowliness. His life shall be divided between a life of obscurity, and a life of never-ending greatness.

Shall He be great unto the [*very* [5]] *ends of the earth*, embracing them in His rule (as David and Solomon had foretold [6]), and so none shall harm those whom He, the King of all the earth, shall protect. The universality of protection is derived from a universality of power. To David God

[1] Lev. xxvi. 5, 6, "comp. Hosea ii. 20 [18 Eng.]; Isa. xiv. 30; xxxii. 18; Jer. xxiii. 8; Ezek. xxviii. 25, 26; xxxiv. 25, 28; xxxvii. 25; xxxviii. 8; Zech. xiv. 10, 11." Casp.

[2] Amos ix. 14; Micah iv. 4. Both use the same word as here.

[3] יִשְׁכְּנוּ. [4] Ps. cii. 27, 28. [5] עַד.

[6] Ps. ii. 8, "the ends of the earth for His possession"; Ps. lxxii. 8, "from the river *unto* (עַד) the ends of the earth." In both cases the אפסי ארץ as here. See "Daniel the Prophet," p. 480.

5 And this *man* [a] shall be the peace, when the

[a] Ps. lxxii. 7; Isa. ix. 6; Zech. ix. 10; Luke ii. 14; Eph. ii. 14.

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says, *I have made thee a great name, like the name of the great that are in the earth.*[1] Of Uzziah it is said, *His name went forth far; for he was marvellously helped, until he was strong;*[2] but of the Messiah alone it is said, that His power should reach to the ends of the earth; as God prophesies of Himself, that His *Name should be great among the Heathen.*[3] So Gabriel said to His Mother, *This*, Whom she should bear, *shall be great.*[4]

5. *And this Man shall be the Peace. This*, emphatically, i.e. "This Same," as is said of Noah, *This same shall comfort us*,[5] or, in the song of Moses, of the Lord, *This Same is my God.*[6] Of Him he saith, not only that He brings peace, but that He Himself[7] is that Peace; as S. Paul saith, *He is our Peace*,[8] and Isaiah calls Him *the Prince of peace*,[9] and at His Birth the heavenly host proclaimed *peace on earth;*[10] and He *preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh;*[11] and on leaving the world He saith, *Peace I leave with you, My Peace I give unto you.*[12] *He shall be our*

[1] 2 Sam. vii. 9. [2] 2 Chron. xxvi. 15, add Ib. 8.
[3] Mal. i. 11, 14. [4] S. Luke i. 32, οὗτος ἔσται μέγας.
[5] Gen. v. 29. [6] Exod. xv. 2.
[7] The word "this" *might* grammatically be taken as agreeing with "peace." "This [viz. this thing] shall be our peace," as Eccles. vi. 9, גם זה הבל, "this too is vanity;" Exod. iii. 15, זה זכרי, "this is My memorial," i.e. זה is not necessarily personal. But this would not alter the sense. For, "this thing is our peace," must necessarily refer to what had been said, viz. the greatness, majesty, tender care of the Messiah. It is most natural to take זה = οὗτος, as a person, since a person was the subject of the verse before.
[8] Eph. ii. 14. [9] Isa. ix. 6.
[10] S. Luke ii. 14. [11] Eph. ii. 17. [12] S. John xiv. 27.

Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he

Peace, within by His Grace, without by His Protection. "Wouldest thou have peace with God, thine own soul, thy neighbour? Go to Christ Who is our Peace,"[1] and follow the footsteps of Christ. "Ask peace of Him Who is Peace. Place Christ in thy heart and thou hast placed Peace there."

When the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces. Assur stands for the most powerful and deadliest foe, "ghostly and bodily," as the Assyrian then was of the people of God. For since this plainly relates to the time after Christ's coming, and (to say the least) after the captivity in Babylon and deliverance[2] from it, which itself followed the dissolution of the Assyrian Empire, the Assyrians cannot be the literal people, who had long since ceased to be.[3] In Isaiah too the

[1] Lap. [2] iv. 10.

[3] A disbeliever in prophecy writes, "If he would quote Micah as designating Bethlehem for the birthplace of the Messiah, he cannot shut his eyes to the fact that the Deliverer to come from thence was to be a *contemporary* shield against the Assyrian" (Dr. Williams in Ess. and Rev. p. 68). Not "contemporary," unless it be certain that Psalmists and Prophets cannot identify themselves with the past and future of their people. The course of events interposed shows that the deliverance was *not* to be contemporary. As the Psalmist, speaking of the passage of the Red Sea, says, *there did we rejoice in Him* (Ps. lxvi. 6), making himself one with them; as Micah himself, speaking of times after the desolation of the land (vii. 13) says, "He will turn again, He will have compassion upon *us*" (Ib. vii. 19); nay, as our Lord Himself says to the Apostles, "I am with *you* alway, even to the end of the world" (S. Matt. xxviii. 20), i.e. with them and their successors to the end of time; so Micah, who had sorrowed with his people in their sorrows

Assyrian is the type of Anti-Christ and of Satan.[1] As Christ is our Peace, so one enemy is chosen to represent all enemies who *vex the Church*,[2] whether the human agents or Satan who stirs them up and uses them. "By the Assyrian," says S. Cyril, "he here means no longer a man out of Babylon, but rather marks out the inventor of sin, Satan. Or rather, to speak fully, the implacable multitude of devils, which spiritually ariseth against all which is holy, and fights against the holy city, the spiritual Zion, whereof the Divine Psalmist saith, *Glorious things are spoken of thee, thou city of God.* For Christ dwelleth in the Church, and maketh it, as it were, His own city, although by His Godhead filling all things. This city of God, then, is a sort of land and country of the sanctified and of those enriched in spirit, in unity with God. When then the Assyrian shall come against our city, i.e. when barbarous and hostile powers fight against the saints, they shall not find it unguarded." The enemy may tread on the land and on its palaces, i.e. lay low outward glory, vex the body which is of earth and the visible temple of the Holy Ghost, as he did S. Paul by *the thorn in the flesh, the minister of Satan to buffet him*, or Job in mind, body, or estate, but *after that he has no more that he can do;*[3] he cannot hurt the soul, because nothing can *separate us from the love of Christ*, and Christ Who is our Peace is in us;[4] and of the saint too it may be said, *The enemy cannot hurt him.*[5] Much as the Church has been vexed at all times by persecutions of devils and of

(i. 8, 10), here rejoices with them in a deliverance far away, after God should for a long time have given them up (v. 3), and which he should not see. "Even L. Bauer translated, 'And if another Assur,' comparing the passage of Virgil which Castalio had already quoted, 'Alter erit tum Tiphys, et altera quæ vehat Argo Delectos heroas.'" Hengst.

[1] Isa. x., and including Babylon, chap. xiv. [2] Acts xii. 1.
[3] S. Luke xii. 4. [4] Rup. [5] Ps. lxxxix. 22.

shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight * principal men.

* Heb. *princes of men.*

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tyrants, Christ has ever consoled her and given her peace in the persecutions themselves:[1] *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us,* so our *consolation also aboundeth by Christ.*[2] The Apostles *departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name.*[3] And S. Paul writeth to the Hebrews, *Ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that ye have in heaven a better and more enduring substance.*[4]

Then shall we raise against him seven shepherds and eight principal men (lit. *anointed*, although elsewhere used of heathen princes).

The *shepherds* are manifestly inferior, spiritual shepherds, acting under the One Shepherd, by His authority, and He in them. The *princes of men* are most naturally a civil power, according to its usage elsewhere.[5] The *seven* is throughout the Old Testament a symbol of a sacred whole, probably of the union of God with the world,[6] reconciled with it; *eight*, when united with it, is something beyond it.[7] Since then *seven* denotes a great, complete, and sacred

[1] Rib. [2] 2 Cor. i. 4, 5. [3] Acts v. 41.

[4] Heb. x. 34.

[5] Joshua xiii. 21; Ps. lxxxiii. 12; Ezek. xxxii. 30. The word stands rather in contrast with מישיח than as equiva ent to it, since מישיח is always used of one, anointed by God, נסיח, unless it be in this place, never.

[6] See Bähr Symbolik, ii. 107, sqq.

[7] See on Amos i. 3. This instance in Micah so far differs from the others, that the two numbers are not united with

6 And they shall * waste the land of Assyria with

* Heb. *eat up.*

multitude, by the *eight* he would designate "an incredible and almost countless multitude." "So in defence of the Church, there shall be raised up very many shepherds and teachers (for at no time will it be forsaken by Christ); yea by more and more, countlessly, so that, however persecutions may increase, there shall never be wanting more to teach, and exhort to, the faith."[1]

6. *And they shall waste,* lit. *feed on,* and so *eat up.* They who were shepherds of their own people, should consume their enemies. Jeremiah uses the same image. *The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her; they shall pitch tents against her round about; they shall feed, each his space.*[2] So Joshua and Caleb say, *They* (the inhabitants of Canaan) are *bread for us.*[3] So it was said to S. Peter, *Arise, Peter, kill and eat;*[4] and what once *was common,* defiled *and unclean,* shall turn to the nourishment and growth of the Church, and be incorporated into Christ, being made part of His Body.

And the land of Nimrod. Babylon, which should displace Assyria, but should carry on its work of chastising God's people, is joined by Micah, as by Isaiah,[5] as an object of His judgment. In Isaiah, they are the actual Assyria[6] and Babylon[7] whose destruction is foretold, yet so as to shadow out rebellion against God in its intensest form, making itself independent of, or measuring itself against, God. Hence, probably, here alone in Holy Scripture, one substantive; and unless *the shepherds* and *the princes of men* be the same class of persons (which scarcely seems probable) they have kindred, yet different, subjects.

[1] Rib. [2] Jer. vi. 3. [3] Num. xiv. 9.
[4] Acts x. 13. [5] Isa. x. 5–34; xiii.–xiv. 27.
[6] Ib. ix. 12–15. [7] Ib. xiv. 13–15.

the sword and the land of [a] Nimrod * in the entrances thereof: thus shall he [b] deliver *us* from the Assyrian,

[a] Gen. x. 8, 10, 11. * Or, *with her own naked swords.* [b] Luke i. 71.

Babylon is called *the land of Nimrod*, as indeed he founded it,[1] but therewith was the author of the tower of Babel also, which was built in *rebellion* against God, whence his own name was derived.[2] Assyria then, and the world-empire which should succeed it, stand as representing the God-opposed world.

In the entrances thereof [lit. *in the gates thereof*[3]]. The shepherds of Israel shall not act on the defensive only, but shall have victory over the world and Satan, carrying back the battle into his own dominions, and overthrowing him there. Satan's malice, so far from hurting the Church, shall turn to its good. Wherein he hoped to waste it, he shall be wasted; wherein he seemed to triumph, he shall be foiled. So it has been ever seen, how, under every persecution, the Church grew. "The more it was pressed

[1] Gen. x. 10.

[2] Lit. "We will rebel." There is no other even plausible etymology.

[3] The E. V. has followed the analogy of the "Caspiæ pylæ," &c., and has paraphrased "openings" or "gates" by "entrances," as if they were "the gates of the country"; which, however, belongs only to narrow entrances, such as Thermopylæ. The rendering in the E. M. "with their own drawn swords" (from Aq. and Ed. v. A. E. and Kim.) is owing to a slavish adherence to parallelism. פתיחות, &c., "drawn swords" (Ps. lv. 22), is fem. after the analogy of תרב itself. The uniform meaning of פתח, "opening," "door," "port," "gate," is plainly not to be deserted in a single case on the ground of parallelism only. The fem. aff. also belongs naturally to the land; *her's*, not *their's*, i.e. the people's.

when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.

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down the more it rose up and flourished."[1] "Shivering the assault of the Pagans, and strengthened more and more, not by resisting, but by enduring."[2] Yet all, by whomsoever done, shall be the work of Christ alone, enduring in martyrs, teaching in pastors, converting through the Apostles of heathen nations. Wherefore he adds:

Thus [*And*] *He shall deliver us from the Assyrian.* Not *they*, the subordinate shepherds, but He, the Chief Shepherd, until *the last enemy shall be destroyed and death shall be swallowed up in victory, shall deliver*, whether by *them* or by Himself as He often so doth—not *us* only (the saying is the larger because unlimited) but—*He shall deliver*, absolutely. Whosoever shall be delivered, He shall be their deliverer; all, whom He alone knoweth, Who alone *knoweth them that are His.*[3] *Neither is there salvation in any other.*[4] *Whoso glorieth let him glory in the Lord.*[5] Every member of Christ has part in this, who, through the grace of God, "has power and strength to have victory and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh"—not he, but the grace of God which is with him; and much more, all, whether Apostles or Apostolic men, or Pastors, or Bishops and Overseers, who, by preaching or teaching or prayer, bring those to the knowledge of the truth, who *sat in darkness and the shadow of death*,[6] and by whom *God translates us into the kingdom of His dear Son.*[7]

7. *And the remnant of Jacob.* Micah,[8] as well as Isaiah,[9]

[1] S. Anton. in S. Athan. vit. ej. c. 79.

[2] S. Aug. de Ag. Christ. c. 12, and other fathers quoted Tertull. Apol. c. ult. n. a. Oxf. Tr.

[3] 2 Tim. ii. 19. [4] Acts iv. 12. [5] 2 Cor. x. 17.
[6] Ps. cvii. 10. [7] Col. i. 13. [8] iv. 7. [9] x. 21.

7 And [a] the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people [b] as a dew from the LORD, as

[a] Ver. 3; Deut. xxxii. 2. [b] Ps. lxxii. 6; cx. 3.

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had prophesied that *a remnant* only should *return unto the Mighty God*. These, though very many in themselves, are yet but a *remnant* only of the unconverted mass; yet this, *the remnant who shall be saved*,[1] who believe in Christ, *the little flock*,[2] of whom were the Apostles and their disciples, *shall be, in the midst of many people*, whom they won to the faith, as John in Asia, Thomas in India, Peter in Babylon and Rome, Paul well-nigh in the whole world, what? something to be readily swallowed up by their multitude? No, but *as a dew from the Lord, as the showers from the grass, which tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men*, quickening to life that, which, like soon-withered[3] grass, no human cultivation, no human help, could reach.

In the Gospel and the grace of Christ there are both, gentleness and might; softness, as *the dew*, might as of *a lion*. For "Wisdom reacheth from one end to another *mightily;* and *sweetly* doth she order all things."[4] *The dew* is, in Holy Scripture, a symbol of Divine doctrine. *My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.*[5] The dew comes down from heaven, is of heavenly not of earthly birth, transparent, glistening with light, reflecting the hues of heaven, gentle, slight, weak in itself, refreshing, cooling the strong heats of the day,[6] consumed itself, yet thereby preserving life, falling on the dry and withered grass wherein all nature droops, and recalling it to

[1] Rom. ix. 27. [2] S. Luke xii. 32.
[3] עֵשֶׂב. See Ps. cii. 5, 12; 2 Kings xix. 26; Isa. xxxvii. 27.
[4] Wisd. viii. 1. [5] Deut. xxxii. 2.
[6] Ecclus. xviii. 16; xliii. 22.

the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.

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freshness of life. And still more in those lands, where from the beginning of April to the end of October,[1] the close of the latter and the beginning of the early rain, during all the hot months of summer, the life of all herbage depends upon the dew alone.[2] *Showers*[3] are so called from the "multitude" of drops, slight and of no account in themselves, descending noiselessly yet penetrating the more deeply. So did the Apostles "bedew the souls of believers with the word of godliness and enrich them abundantly with the words of the Gospel,"[4] themselves dying, and the Church living the more through their death,[5] quenching the fiery heat of passions, and watering the dry and barren soil, that it might bring forth fruits unto Christ. Yet, they say, *the excellency of the power was of God and not of us*,[6] and *God gave the increase*.[7] For neither was their doctrine *of man nor by man;*[8] but it came from heaven, the Holy Spirit teaching them invisibly and making *unlearned and ignorant* men *mighty in word and deed*. "Whence these and these alone the Church of Christ looks up to, as furnishing the rule of truth."[9] "The herb, upon which this dew falleth, groweth to God without any aid of man, and flourisheth, and needeth neither doctrines of philosophers, nor the rewards or praises of men."[10]

[1] Called אִיתָן, because only "perennial" streams still flowed.

[2] On its importance to vegetable life, see Gen. xxvii. 28; Deut. xxxiii. 13, 28; Hag. i. 10; Zech. viii. 12.

[3] רְבִיבִים. It occurs Deut. xxxii. 2; Ps. lxv. 11 (Heb.), lxxii. 6, as especially refreshing.

[4] S. Cyr. [5] 2 Cor. iv. 12. [6] Ib. iv. 7.
[7] 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. [8] Gal. i. 12. [9] Rup. [10] Rib.

8 ¶ And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of *sheep: who, if he go through,

* Or, *goats.*

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8. *And the remnant of Jacob shall be as a young lion.* [1] What more unlike than the sweetness of the dew and the fierceness of the lion? What so different as the gentle shower distilling on the herb, and the savageness or vehemence of a *lion roaring among the flocks of sheep?* Yet both are ascribed to *the remnant of Jacob.* Why? Because the Apostles of Christ are both tender and severe, tender in teaching and exhorting, severe in rebuking and avenging. How does Paul teach, *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation; now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God!* [2] What sweeter than the dew of love, the shower of true affection? And so, on to that, "our heart is enlarged." They are such drops of dew as no one could doubt came from *the Lord, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.* [3] Yet the same Apostle after a little writes, *This is the third time I am coming to you. I told you before and foretell you, and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned and to all others, that if I come again, I will not spare, since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me.* [4] See the severity of a master, like the roaring of *a lion among the beasts of the forest.* For such surely are they whom he rebukes for *the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they had committed.* [5]

[1] Rup. [2] 2 Cor. v. 19–vi. 11. [3] Ib. i. 3.
[4] Ib. xiii. 1–3. [5] Ib. xii. 21.

both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver.

9 Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.

Was he not to such as a lion?[1] Was not Peter such, when he rebuked Ananias first and then Sapphira his wife, and they fell down and gave up the ghost? They *tread down* or *cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God;*[2] as Christ Himself, Who spake in them, is both a lamb and the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*,[3] and nothing is so terrible as *the wrath of the Lamb*.[4]

And none can deliver. "For as the Apostles past from nation to nation, and trod down heathenism, subduing it to Christ, and taking within their net the many converted nations, none could withdraw from the Apostles' doctrine those whom they had converted."[5] The heathen world "cried out that the state is beset, that the Christians are in their fields, their forts, their islands."[6] "We are a people of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you, cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camp, your tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum! We leave you your temples only. We can count your armies, our numbers in a single province will be greater."[7]

9. *Their hand shall be lifted up upon their adversaries.* The might of the Church is the Might of Christ in her, and the glory of the Church is His from Whom it comes and to Whom it returns. It is all one, whether this be said to Christ or to the *remnant of Jacob*, i.e. His Church. Her *enemies* are His, and hers only because they are His, and

[1] See again 1 Cor. v. 2–5. [2] 2 Cor. x. 5.
[3] Rev. v. 5. [4] Ib. vi. 16. [5] Dion.
[6] Apol. c. 1, p. 2, Oxf. Tr. [7] Ib. c. 37, p. 78.

10 [a] And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD, that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots:

[a] Zech. ix. 10.

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hate her as belonging to Him. They *shall be cut off*, either ceasing to be His enemies, or ceasing to be, as Julian or Arius or Anti-Christ, *whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His Mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His Coming.*[1] And in the end, Satan also, over whom Christ gave the Apostles *power to tread on all the power of the Enemy*,[2] shall be *bruised under our feet*.[3]

10. *And it shall come to pass in that day*, of grace in the kingdom of Christ and of His Presence in the Apostles and with the Church, *I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee.* The greater the glory and purity of the Church, the less it needs or hangs upon human aid. The more it is reft of human aid, the more it hangs upon God. So God promises, as a blessing, that He will remove from her all mere human resources, both what was in itself evil, and what, although good, had been abused. Most of these things, whose removal is here promised, are spoken of at the same time by Isaiah, as sin, or the occasion of sin, and of God's judgments to Judah. *Soothsayers* (the same word), *horses, chariots, idols the work of their hands; high towers, fenced walls.*[4] "I will take from thee all arms wherewith, while unconverted, thou opposedst the faith,"[5] all which thou settest up as idols in place of God. (Such are witchcrafts, soothsayers, graven images, images of Ashtaroth.) "I will take from thee all outward means and instruments of defence which aforetime were turned into pride and sin;" as horses and chariots. Not such shall be the arms of

[1] 2 Thess. ii. 8. [2] S. Luke x. 19. [3] Rom. xvi. 20.
[4] Isa. ii. 6–8, 15. [5] Rib. Lap.

11 And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds :

12 And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand and thou shalt have no *more* [a] soothsayers :

13 [b] Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy * standing images out of the midst of thee ; and

[a] Isa. ii. 6. [b] Zech. xiii. 2. * Or, *statues.*

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the Church, not such her strongholds. *A horse is a vain thing to save a man.* Her arms shall be the despised Cross of shame ; her warriors, they who bear it ; their courage, to endure in holy patience and meekness ; their might, the Holy Spirit within them ; their victories, through death, not of others, but their Master's and, in His, their own. They shall overcome the world, as He overcame it, and through Him alone and His merits Who overcame it by suffering.

11–15. *I will cut off the cities of thy land.* So God promised by Zechariah, *Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls ; for I will be unto her a wall of fire round about.*[1] The Church shall not need the temptation of human defence ; for God shall fence her in on every side. Great cities too, as the abode of luxury and sin, of power and pride, and, mostly, of cruelty, are chiefly denounced as the objects of God's anger. Babylon stands as the emblem of the whole city of the world or of the devil, as opposed to God. "[2] The first city was built by Cain ; Abel and the other saints *had no continuing city*"[3] here. *Cities,* then, will include "[2] all the tumults and evil passions and ambition and strife and bloodshed which Cain brought in among men. Cities are collectively called and are Babylon, *with whom* (as in the Revelation we hear a voice from heaven saying) *the kings*

[1] ii. 4, 5. [2] Rup. [3] Heb. xiii. 14.

thou shalt [a] no more worship the work of thine hands.

14 And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee: so will I destroy thy * cities.

15 And I will [b] execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.

[a] Isa. ii. 8. * Or, *enemies.*
[b] Ps. cxlix. 7; ver. 8; 2 Thess. i. 8.

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of the earth committed fornication, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies; [1] and of which it is written, *And a mighty Angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city, Babylon, be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.* [2] "Great rest then is promised to Holy Zion, i.e. the Church, when the cities or strongholds of the land [strongholds, as they are, of earthliness] shall be destroyed. For together with them are included all objects of desire in them, with the sight whereof the citizens of the kingdom of God, while pilgrims here, are tempted; whereof the wise man saith, *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.*" The fulfilment reaches on to the Day of Judgment, when the Church shall finally receive glory from the Lord, and be *without spot and wrinkle.* [3] All looks on to that Day. The very largeness of the promise, which speaks, in its fullest sense, of the destruction of things, without which we can hardly do in this life (as cities [4]), or things very useful to the needs of man (as horses), carries

[1] Rev. xviii. 3. [2] Ib. xviii. 21. [3] Eph. v. 27.
[4] In ver. 14. Jon. has "I will cut off thy *enemies*," whence E.M. But although עָר stands for צָר, "enemy," 1 Sam. xxviii. 16, and plur. Ps. cxxxix. 20 (in both places with affix), here every object mentioned is of things, *belonging* to Judah, its own.

CHAPTER VI

1 *God's controversy for unkindness,* 6 *for ignorance,* 10 *for injustice,* 16 *and for idolatry.*

HEAR ye now what the LORD saith; Arise; con-

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us on yet more to that Day when there will be no more need of any outward things; "when the heavy body shall be changed, and shall have the swiftness of angels, and shall be transported whither it willeth, without *chariots* and *horses;* and all things which tempt the eye shall cease; and no evil shall enter; and there shall be no need of *divining,* amid the presence and full knowledge of God, and where the ever-present Face of God, Who is Truth, shall shine on all, and nothing be uncertain or unknown; nor shall they need to form in their souls images of Him Whom His own *shall see as He Is;* nor shall they esteem anything of self, or the work of their own hands; but God shall be All in all."[1] In like way, the woe on those who obey not the truth also looks on to the end. It too is final. There is nothing to soften it. Punishments in the course of life are medicinal. Here no mention is made of Mercy, but only of *executing vengeance;* and that, *with wrath and fury;* and that, *such as they have not heard.* For as *eye hath not seen, nor heart conceived the good things laid up in store for those who love* God, so neither the evil things prepared for those who, in act, show that they hate Him.

CHAP. VI. The foregoing prophecy closed with the final cleansing of the Church and the wrath of God resting on the wicked, when, as S. Paul saith, *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not*

[1] Rup.

tend thou * before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice.

* Or, *with.*

the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.[1] The Prophet here begins his third and last summons to judgment, in the Name, as it were, of the All-Holy Trinity, against Whom they had sinned.

1. *Hear ye now what the Lord saith:* If ye will not hear the rebuke of man, hear now at last the word of God. "*Arise* thou, Micah." The Prophet was not willing to be the herald of woe to his people; but had to *arise* at the bidding of God, that he might not *be rebellious like that rebellious house.*[2] *Stand up;* as one having all authority to rebuke, and daunted by none. He rouses the hearer, as showing it to be a very grave, urgent matter, to be done promptly, urgently, without delay. *Contend thou before* [better, as in E.M., *with*[3]] *the mountains.* Since man, who had reason, would not use his reason, God calls the mountains and hills, who *unwillingly,*[4] as it were, had been the scenes of their idolatry, as if He would say, "Insensate though ye be, ye are more sensible than Israel, whom I endowed with sense; for ye feel the voice and command of God your Creator and obey Him; they do not. I cite you, to represent your guilty inhabitants, that, through you they may hear My complaint to be just, and own themselves guilty, repent, and ask forgiveness."[5] "The altars

[1] 2 Thess. i. 7–10. [2] Ezek. ii. 8.

[3] This is the uniform sense of ריב with את as well as with עם. See Num. xx. 13; Judges viii. 1; Prov. xxv. 9; Isa. xlv. 9; l. 8; Jer. ii. 9; Neh. v. 7; xiii. 11, 17 (all, in Fürst Conc.).

[4] Rom. viii. 20. [5] Lap.

2 [a] Hear ye, O mountains, [b] the LORD's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth: for

[a] Deut. xxxii. 1; Ps. l. 1, 4; Isa. i. 2. [b] Hosea xii. 2.

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and idols, the blood of the sacrifices, the bones and ashes upon them, with unuttered yet clear voice, spoke of the idolatry and guilt of the Jews, and so pronounced God's charge and expostulation to be just." Ezekiel is bidden, in like way, to prophesy against *the mountains of Israel*,[1] *I will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places, and your altars shall be desolate.* "[2] Lifeless nature without voice tells the glory of God; without ears it hears what the Lord speaks."[3]

2. *Hear, ye strong* [or, it may be, *ye enduring*[4]] *foundations of the earth.* Mountains and rocks carry the soul to times far away, before and after. They change not, like the habitable, cultivated surface of the earth. There they were, before the existence of our short-lived generations; there they will be, until time shall cease to be. They have witnessed so many vicissitudes of human things, themselves unchanging. The Prophet is directed to seize this feeling of simple nature. "They have seen so much before me," Yes! "then they have seen all which befell my forefathers; all God's benefits, all along, to them and to us, all their and our unthankfulness."

He will plead with Israel. God hath a strict, severe judgment[5] with His people, and yet vouchsafes to clear Himself before His creatures, to come down from His throne of glory and place Himself on equal terms with them. He does not *plead* only, but mutually (such is the force of the word) *impleads with*[6] His people, hears if they would say

[1] Ezek. vi. 2–5. [2] Poc.
[3] Ps. xix. 3; S. Luke xix. 40.
[4] אֵיתָנִים. See Ges. Lex. p. 644. [5] רִיב. [6] יִתְוַכַּח

[a] the LORD hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel.

[a] Isa. i. 18, v. 3, 4, and xliii. 26; Hosea iv. 1.

aught against Himself, and then gives His own judgment.[1] But this willingness to hear only makes us condemn ourselves, so that we should be without excuse before Him. We do owe ourselves wholly to Him Who made us and hath given us all things richly to enjoy. If we have withdrawn ourselves from His Service, unless He dealt hardly with us, we dealt rebelliously and ungratefully with Him. God brings all pleas into a narrow space. The fault is with Him or with us. He offers to clear Himself. He sets before us His good deeds, His Loving-kindness, Providence, Grace, Long-suffering, Bounty, Truth, and contrasts with them our evil deeds, our unthankfulness, despitefulness, our breach of His laws, and disorderings of His creation. And then, in the face of His Goodness, He asks, "What evil have I done, what good have I left undone?" so that our evil and negligences should be but a requital of His. For if it is evil to return evil for evil, or not to return good for good, what evil is it to return evil for His exceeding good! As He says by Isaiah, *What could have been done more to My vineyard and I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?*[2] And our Blessed Lord asks: *Many good works have I shewed you from My Father. For which of those works do ye stone Me?*[3] *Which of you convinceth Me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?*[4]

[1] Comp. Isa. xliii. 26; Jer. ii. 5, 6, 9. So עָנָה בִּי, "testify against Me" (ver. 3), is a judicial term, lit. "answer against Me," i.e. "answer judicial interrogatories," then generally "depose," "testify," Num. xxxv. 30; Deut. xix. 18; Job xv. 6; Ruth i. 21; Isa. iii. 9; lix. 12; Jer. xiv. 7.

[2] Isa. v. 4. [3] S. John x. 32. [4] Ib. viii. 46.

3 O my people, [a] what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.

[a] Jer. ii. 5, 31.

Away from the light of God we may plead excuses, and cast the blame of our sins upon our temptations, or passions, or nature, i.e. on Almighty God Himself, Who made us. When His light streams in upon our conscience, we are silent. Blessed if we be silenced and confess to Him then, that we be not first silenced in the Day of Judgment. *Righteous Job*[1] said, *I desire to reason with God;*[2] but when his *eye saw Him*, he said, *wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*[3]

3. *O My people.* This one tender word,[4] twice repeated,[5] contains in one a whole volume of reproof. It sets before the eyes God's choice of them of His free grace, and the whole history of His loving-kindness, if so they could be ashamed of their thanklessness and turn to Him. "Mine," He says, "ye are by creation, by Providence, by great deliverances and by hourly love and guardianship, by gifts of nature, the world, and grace; such things have I done for thee; what against thee? *what* evil *have I done unto thee?*" *Thy foot did not swell these forty years,*[6] for He upbears in all ways where He leads. *Wherein have I wearied thee?* for *His commandments are not grievous.*[7] *Thou hast been weary of Me, O Israel,* God says by Isaiah,[8] *I have not wearied thee with incense; thou hast wearied Me with thine iniquities.*

4. *For I have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants.* What wert thou?

[1] Job i. 8; ii. 3; Ezek. xiv. 20.
[2] Job xiii. 3.
[3] Ib. xlii. 5, 6.
[4] עַמִּי.
[5] Here and v. 5.
[6] Deut. viii. 4.
[7] 1 S. John v. 3.
[8] Isa. xliii. 22–24.

4 [a] For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

[a] Exod. xii. 51, xiv. 30, and xx. 2; Deut. iv. 20; Amos ii. 10.

What art thou? Who made thee what thou art? God reminds them. They *were* slaves; they *are* His people in the heritage of the heathen, and that by His *outstretched arm*. God mentions some heads of the mercies which He had shown them, when He had made them His people, His redemption of them from Egypt, His guidance through the wilderness, His leading them over the last difficulty to the promised land. The use of the familiar language of the Pentateuch[1] is like the touching of so many key-notes, recalling the whole harmony of His love. *Moses, Aaron, and Miriam* together, are Lawgiver, to deliver and instruct, Priest, to atone; and Prophetess[2] to praise God; and the name of Miriam at once recalled the mighty works at the Red Sea and how they *then* thanked God.

5. *Remember now.* The word translated *now* is a very tender one, like our "*do* now remember" or "*do* remember," beseeching instead of commanding. "I might command, but I speak tenderly, that I may lead thee to own the truth."[3] *What Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him.* God did not only raise up Moses, Aaron, Miriam, out of their brethren, but He turned the curse of the alien Balaam into a blessing; and that, not for their righteousness (for even then they

[1] העלתיך מארץ מצרים, see Gen. l. 24; בית עבדים, Exod. xiii. 3, 14; xx. 2; Deut. viii. 14; xiii. 10; and united, as here, with פדה, Deut. vii. 8; xiii. 5.

[2] Exod. xv. 20. [3] Dion.

5 O my people, remember now what [a] Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of

[1] Num. xxii. 5, xxiii. 7, and xxiv. 10, 11; Deut xxiii. 4, 5; Joshua xxiv. 9, 10; Rev. ii. 14.

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were rebellious), but against their deserts, out of His own truth and righteousness. Not that the curse of Balaam could in itself have hurt them; but, in proportion to his reputation, it would have infused great energy into their enemies, and its reversal must have struck a great panic into them and into others. Human might having failed in Sihon and Og, Balak sought superhuman. God showed them by their own diviner that it was against them. Even after they had seduced Israel, through Balaam's devilish counsel, Midian seems to have been stricken by God with panic, and not to have struck a blow.[1]

From Shittim unto Gilgal. The words are separated by the Hebrew accent from what went before. It is then probably said in concise energy for "Remember too from Shittim to Gilgal," i.e. all the great works of God *from Shittim*,[2] the last encampment of Israel out of the promised land, where they so sinned in Baal-peor, *unto Gilgal*, the first in the promised land, which they entered by miracle, where the Ark rested amid the victories given them, where the Covenant was renewed, and *the reproach of Egypt* was *rolled away*.[3] Remember all, from your own deep sin and rebellion to the deep mercy of God.

That ye may know the righteousness [*righteousnesses*] *of the Lord;* His Faithfulness in performing His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God speaketh of His promises, not as what they were in themselves, mere mercy, but as

[1] Num. xxxi. 49.
[2] See on Hosea ix. 10, and on Joel iii. 18.
[3] Joshua v. 9.

Beor answered him from [a] Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know [b] the righteousness of the LORD.

[a] Num. xxv. 1 and xxxiii. 49; Joshua iv. 19 and v. 10.
[b] Judges v. 11.

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what they became, through that gracious and free promise, *righteousness*, in that He had bound Himself to fulfil what He had, out of mere grace, promised. So in the New Testament He saith, *God is not unrighteous that He should forget your works and labour which proceedeth of love;* [1] and *He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.* [2] Micah speaks, by a rare idiom, of the *righteousnesses* [3] *of the Lord*, each act of mercy being a separate effluence of His Righteousness. The very names of the places suggest the righteous acts of God, the unrighteous of Israel. "But we too, who desire with unveiled face to behold the glory of the Lord, and have Abraham really for our father, let us, when we have sinned, hear God pleading against us, and reproving us for the multitude of His benefits. For we too once served Pharaoh and the people of Egypt, labouring in works of mire and clay; and He redeemed us Who gave Himself a Redemption for all; that we, the redeemed of the Lord,[4] *whom He redeemed out of the hand of the enemy and gathered from the lands*, might *say, His mercy endureth for ever.* He sent also before our face Moses, the spiritual Law, and Aaron the High Priest, not bearing the typical Ephod and Urim, but having in His Forehead the seal of holiness which God the Father sealed; and Miriam, the foreshowing of prophets. Recollect we too what *he* thought against us who willed to devour us, the true Balak, Satan,

[1] Heb. vi. 10. [2] 1 S. John i. 9.
[3] צדקות יי, only occurs besides Judges v. 11 (bis), 1 Sam. xii. 7; thence צְדָקֹתַיִךְ, Dan. ix. 16. Else only Ps. ciii. 6.
[4] Ps. cvii. 1–3.

6 ¶ Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, *and* bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves * of a year old?

* Heb. *sons of a year?*

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who laid snares for us through Balaam, *the destroyer of the people*, fearing lest we should cover his land and occupy it, withdrawing the earthly-minded from his empire."[1]

6, 7. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?* The people, thus arraigned, burst in, as men do, with professions that they would be no more ungrateful; that they will do anything, everything—but what they ought. With them it shall be but "Ask and have." They wish only to know *with what* they shall come? They would *be beforehand*[2] with Him, anticipating His wishes; they would, with all the submission of a creature, *bow*,[3] prostrate themselves before God; they acknowledge His High Majesty, who dwelleth on high,[4] *the Most High God*, and would *abase themselves*[5] before His lofty greatness, if they but knew, "how" or "wherewith." They would give of their best; sacrifices the choicest of their kind, which should be wholly His, whole burnt-offerings, offered exactly according to the law,[6] *bullocks of a year old;* then too, the next choice offering, the rams; and these, as they were offered for the whole people on very solemn occasions, in vast multitudes, *thou-*

[1] From S. Jer. [2] אֲקַדֵּם [3] אִכָּף [4] אֱלֹהֵי מָרוֹם

[5] The word occurs only of one sinking, bowed down, amid persecutions, Ps. lvii. 7; of the "bowed down," whom God raiseth up, Ps. cxlv. 14; cxlvi. 8; and in Isa. lviii. 5, of "ostentatious outward humiliation before God." So probably here, where alone the reflective occurs.

[6] Lev. ix. 2, 3.

7 [a] Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, *or* with ten thousands of [b] rivers of oil? [c] shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression, the fruit of my * body *for* the sin of my soul?

[a] Ps. l. 9 and li. 16; Isa. i. 11. [b] Job xxix. 6. [c] 2 Kings xvi. 3, xxi. 6, and xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31 and xix. 5; Ezek. xxiii. 37. * Heb. *belly.*

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sands or ten thousands;[1] the *oil* which accompanied the burnt sacrifice, should flow in rivers;[2] nay, more still; they would not withhold their sons, their first-born sons, from God, part, as they were, of themselves, *or* any *fruit of their own body.* They enhance the offering by naming the tender relation to themselves.[3] They would offer everything (even what God forbade), excepting only what alone He asked for, their heart, its love and its obedience.[4] The form of their offer contains this; they ask zealously, "with *what* shall I come." It is an outward offering only, a *thing* which they would bring. Hypocritical eagerness! a sin against light. For to inquire further, when God has already revealed anything, is to deny that He has revealed it. It comes from the wish that He had *not* revealed what He *has* revealed. "Whoso, after he hath found the truth, discusseth anything

[1] At Solomon's dedication, 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep, 1 Kings viii. 63; by Hezekiah, 2000 bullocks and 17,000 sheep, 2 Chron. xxx. 24; by Josiah, 30,000 lambs and kids for the paschal offerings and 3000 bullocks, Ib. xxxv. 7.

[2] Comp. Job xx. 17, "rivers" (נהרי, as here) "of streams of honey and cream." Oil was used in all meal-offerings which accompanied the burnt-offering, Lev. ii. 1, 2, 4–7; vii. 10, 12, and so entered into the daily sacrifice, Exod. xxix. 40, and all sacrifices of consecration, Exod. xxix. 2, 23; Lev. vi. 15, 21; Num. viii. 8.

[3] See Deut. xxviii. 53. [4] Conc. Chalc. Act. 3.

8 He hath [a] shewed thee, O man, what *is* good;

[a] Deut. x. 12; 1 Sam. xv. 22; Hosea vi. 6 and xii. 6.

further, seeketh a lie." [1] God had told them, long before, from the time that He made them His people, what He desired of them; so Micah answers,

8. *He hath shewed thee.* Micah does not tell them *now*, as for the first time; which would have excused them. He says, *He hath shewed thee; He*, about Whose mind and will and pleasure they were pretending to inquire, *the Lord* their God. He *had* shown it to them. The law was full of it. He showed it to them, when He said, *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?* [2] They had asked, "*with what* outward *thing* [3] shall I come before the Lord"; the Prophet tells them, "what *thing* is *good*," the inward man of the heart, righteousness, love, humility.

And what doth the Lord require [*search, seek*] *of thee?* The very word [4] implies an earnest search within. He would say, "Trouble not thyself as to any of these things, burnt-offerings, rams, calves, without thee. For God seeketh not thine, but thee; not thy substance, but thy spirit; not ram or goat, but thy heart." [5] "Thou askest, what thou shouldest offer for thee? Offer thyself. For what else doth the Lord seek of thee, but thee? Because, of all earthly creatures, He hath made nothing better than thee, He seeketh thyself from thyself, because thou hadst lost thyself." [6]

[1] The inquiry, v. 7, was, *Will the Lord be pleased?* יי הירצה. The subject of, *He hath shewn thee*, is obviously that same Lord.

[2] Deut. x. 12, 13. [3] בְּמָה, 6; מה טוֹב, 8. [4] דרשׁ.

[5] Rup. [6] S. Aug. Serm. 48, ad loc. § 2.

and what doth the LORD require of thee, but [a] to

[a] Gen. xviii. 19; Isa. i. 17.

To do judgment, are chiefly all acts of equity; *to love mercy*, all deeds of love. *Judgment* is what right requires; *mercy*, what love. Yet, secondarily, "to do judgment" is to pass righteous judgments in all cases; and so, as to others, *judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*;[1] and as to one's self also. Judge equitably and kindly of others, humbly of thyself. "Judge of thyself in thyself without acceptance of thine own person, so as not to spare thy sins, nor take pleasure in them, because *thou* hast done them. Neither praise thyself in what is good in thee, nor accuse God in what is evil in thee. For this is wrong judgment, and so, not judgment at all. This thou didst, being evil; reverse it, and it will be right. Praise God in what is good in thee; accuse thyself in what is evil. So shalt thou anticipate the judgment of God, as He saith, [2] *If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord.*" [3] He addeth, *love mercy;* being merciful, out of love, *not of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver.*[4] These acts together contain the whole duty to man, corresponding with and formed upon the mercy and justice of God.[5] All which is due, anyhow or in any way, is of *judgment;* all which is free toward man, although not free toward God, is of *mercy.* There remains, *walk humbly with thy God;* not, *bow* thyself only before Him, as they had offered,[6] nor again *walk with Him* only, as did Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Job; but *walk humbly* (lit. *bow down* [7] *the going*) yet still *with thy God;* never

[1] S. John vii. 24.
[2] 1 Cor. xi. 31.
[3] S. Aug. l.c.
[4] 2 Cor. ix. 7.
[5] Ps. ci. 1; lxi. 7.
[6] v. 6.

[7] הַצְנֵעַ לֶכֶת. The root only occurs besides in the form צְנוּעִים, Prov. xi. 2, where it is opposed to *pride.* In the Targg.

lifting up thyself, never sleeping, never standing still, but ever walking on, yet ever *casting thyself down;* and the more thou goest on in grace, the more cast thyself down; as our Lord saith, *When ye have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.*[1]

It is not a "crouching before God" displeased (such as they had thought of), but the humble love of the forgiven; *walk humbly*, as the creature with the Creator, but in love, *with thine* own *God. Humble* thyself with God, Who humbled Himself in the flesh; *walk on* with Him, Who is thy Way. Neither humility nor obedience alone would be true graces; but to cleave fast to God, because He is thine *All*, and to *bow thyself down*, because thou art nothing, and thine All is He and of Him. It is altogether a Gospel precept; bidding us, *Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect;*[2] *Be merciful, as your Father also is merciful;*[3] and yet, in the end, have *that same mind which was also in Christ Jesus, Who made Himself of no reputation.*[4]

The offers of the people, stated in the bare nakedness in which Micah exhibits them, have a character of irony. But it is the irony of the truth and of the fact itself. The creature has nothing of its own to offer; *the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin;*[5] and the offerings, as they rise in value, become, not useless only, but sinful. Such offerings would bring down anger, not mercy. Micah's words then are, for their vividness, an almost proverbial expression of the nothingness of all which we sinners could offer to God. "We, who are of the people of God, knowing

Afel is = Heb. הִנִּיחַ. The noun is also used of humility. The Arabic has no bearing upon it, all its meanings being derived from the original "formed."

[1] S. Luke xvii. 10. [2] S. Matt. v. 48.
[3] S. Luke vi. 36. [4] Phil. ii. 5, 7. [5] Heb. x. 4.

do justly, and to love mercy, and to * walk humbly with thy God?

* Heb. *humble* thyself *to walk.*

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that *in* His *sight shall no man living be justified*,[1] and saying, *I am a beast with Thee*,[2] trust in no pleas before His judgment-seat, but pray; yet we put no trust in our very prayers. For there is nothing worthy to be offered to God for sin, and no humility can wash away the stains of offences. In penitence for our sins, we hesitate and say, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?* how shall I come, so as to be admitted into familiar intercourse with my God? One and the same spirit revolveth these things in each of us or of those before us, who have been pricked to repentance, 'what worthy offering can I make to the Lord?' This and the like we revolve, as the Apostle saith: *We know not what to pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*[3] 'Should I offer myself wholly as a burnt-offering to Him? If, understanding spiritually all the Levitical sacrifices, I should present them in myself, and offer my first-born, i.e. what is chief in me, my soul, I should find nothing worthy of His greatness. Neither in ourselves, nor in ought earthly, can we find anything worthy to be offered to reconcile us with God. For the sin of the soul, blood alone is worthy to be offered; not the blood of calves, or rams, or goats, but our own; yet our own too is not offered, but given back, being due already.'[4] The Blood of Christ alone sufficeth to do away all sin."[5] "The whole is said, in order to instruct us, that, without the shedding of the Blood of Christ and its Virtue and Merits, we cannot please God, though we offered ourselves and all that we have,

[1] Ps. cxliii. 2. [2] Ib. lxxiii. 22. [3] Rom. viii. 26.
[4] Ps. cxvi. 8. [5] From S. Jer., S. Cyr., Rup., Dion.

within and without: and also, that so great are the benefits bestowed upon us by the love of Christ, that we can repay nothing of them." [1]

But then it is clear that there is no teaching in this passage in Micah, which there is not in the law.[2] The developments in the prophets relate to the person and character of the Redeemer. The law too contained both elements: (1) the ritual of sacrifice, impressing on the Jew the need of an Atoner; (2) the moral law, and the graces inculcated in it, obedience, love of God and man, justice, mercy, humility, and the rest. There was no hint in the law that half was acceptable to God instead of the whole; that sacrifice of animals would supersede self-sacrifice or obedience. There was nothing on which the Pharisee could base his heresy. What Micah said, Moses had said. The corrupt of the people offered a half-service, what cost them least, as faith without love always does. Micah, in this, reveals to them nothing new; but tells them that this half-service is contrary to the first principles of their law. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good.* Sacrifice, without love of God and man, was not even so much as the body without the soul. It was an abortion, a monster. For one end of sacrifice was to inculcate the insufficiency of all our good, apart from the Blood of Christ; that, do what we would, *all* came *short of the glory of God.*[3] But to substitute sacrifice, which was a confession that at best we were miserable sinners, unable, of ourselves, to please God, for any efforts to please Him or to avoid displeasing Him, would be a direct contradiction of the law, antinomianism under the dispensation of the law itself.

Micah changes the words of Moses, in order to adapt them to the crying sins of Israel at that time. He then upbraids

[1] Dion.

[2] As is so often said, in order to depreciate the law, e.g. in Dr. Stanley's J. Church, p. 448.

[3] Rom. iii. 23.

9 The LORD's voice crieth unto the city, and * *the*

* Or, *thy name shall see that which is.*

them in detail, and that, with those sins which were patent, which, when brought home to them, they could not deny, the sins against their neighbour.

9. *The voice of the Lord crieth unto the city*, i.e. Jerusalem, as the metropolis of their wealth and their sin, the head and heart of their offending. *Crieth*, aloud, earnestly, intently, so that all might hear. So God says, *Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She crieth at the gates,—unto you, O men, I cry, and my voice* is *to the sons of men;*[1] and Isaiah prophesied of S. John Baptist, as *the voice of one crying in the wilderness;*[2] and our Lord saith, *He that heareth you, heareth Me.*[3] *And the man of wisdom shall see Thy Name.* The voice of God is in the hearing of all, but *the wise* only *seeth the Name of* God.[4] The word rendered *wisdom* means, *that which is*,[5] and so, that

[1] Prov. viii. 1, 3, 4.

[2] Isa. xl. 3; S. Matt. iii. 3. [3] S. Luke x. 16.

[4] This, the simplest, is the most energetic rendering. Other possible renderings of the simple words, וְתוּשִׁיָּה יִרְאֶה שְׁמֶךָ, come to the same. Such are, "And wisdom (i.e. wholly wise) is he who regards Thy Name;" or "Thy Name (i.e. Thou, such as Thy Name expresses of Thee) beholdeth wisdom," i.e. the really wise, or religious; or, "And wisdom is it, that one regards Thy Name;" or, with the change of a vowel (יִרְאֶה for יִרְאָה), "and wisdom is it, to fear Thy Name." In regard to the use of the abstract, *wisdom*, for the concrete, *the wise*, Poc. compares Prov. xiii. 6, "wickedness overthrows sin," i.e. the sinner, and Ib. xx. 1, '*wine*' for *a man of wine*. He quotes also אמר קהלת, Eccl. i. 2, in illustration of the anomaly of gender, and vii. 8, מתנה יאבד.

[5] There is no other even plausible etymology of תּוּשִׁיָּה, than יָשׁ, whose 3rd radical appears in איתי in Daniel, and in Syriac, and in איתיאל, Heb. See "Daniel the Prophet," p. 49.

man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

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which alone *is*, which alone has any real solid being, because it alone abides, *wisdom*, or counsel according to God. Such as are thus wise shall *see the Name of God* (as Jeremiah says to his *generation*,[1] *See ye the word of the Lord*). They shall see His power and majesty and all which His Name expresses, as they are displayed severally in each work of His: He shall speak to them by all things wherein He is; and so seeing Him now *in a glass darkly*, they shall hereafter see all, His Glory, His Goodness, His Love, Himself, *face to face*.

Hear ye the rod, i.e. the scourge of the wrath of God. The name and the image recall the like prophecies of Isaiah, so that Micah in one word epitomises the prophecies of Isaiah, or Isaiah expands the word of Micah. *The rod in thine hand is My indignation*;[2] *As if the rod lifted up Him, Who is not wood*;[3] *He lifteth up his rod against thee*;[4] *Thou hast broken the rod* (which is) *on his shoulder*;[5] *The Lord hath broken the rod of the wicked*;[6] *whereon the grounded* [i.e. fixed by the decree of God] *staff shall pass*.[7]

And Who hath appointed it, i.e. beforehand, fixing the time and place, when and where it should come. So Jeremiah says, *How canst thou* (sword of the Lord) *be quiet, and the Lord hath given it a charge to Ashkelon and to the sea-shore? there hath He appointed it*.[8] He Who has *appointed it*,

[1] Jer. ii. 31, add "Exod. xx. 18, *and all the people saw* קוֹלוֹת *the voices*, or *thunderings*, and, *see the smell of my son*, Gen. xxvii. 27." Poc.

[2] Isa. x. 5. [3] Ib. x. 15. [4] Ib. x. 24.
[5] Ib. ix. 3, Heb. [6] Ib. xiv. 5. [7] Ib. xxx. 32.

[8] Jer. xlvii. 7. יַעַר is used in regard to time, 2 Sam. xx. 5. It is used of both time and place in the Arab. Conj. iii. as in מוֹעֵד, and the Syr.

10 ¶ * Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the † scant measure [a] *that is* abominable ?

* Or, Is there *yet unto every man an house of the wicked, &c.*

† Heb. *measure of leanness,* Amos viii. 5.

[a] Deut. xxv. 13–16 ; Prov. xi. 1 and xx. 10, 23.

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changeth not His decree, unless man changeth: nor is He lacking in power to fulfil it. He will surely bring it to pass. All which can be thought of, of fear, terror, motives to repentance, awe, hope, trust, is in that word *Who.* It is God; hopes and fears may be infinite.

10. *Are there*[1] *yet,* still after all the warnings and long-suffering of God, *the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked? Treasures of wickedness* are treasures gotten by wickedness; yet it means too that the wicked shall have no treasure, no fruit, but his wickedness. He treasureth up treasures, but of wickedness; as S. James saith, *Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days,*[2] i.e. of the *miseries that shall come upon them.*[3] The words stand over against one another: *house of the wicked, treasures of wickedness;* as though the whole *house of the wicked* was but a "treasure-house of wickedness." Therein it began; therein and in its rewards it shall end. *Are there yet?* the Prophet asks. There shall soon cease to be. The treasure shall be spoiled; the iniquity alone shall remain.

And the scant ephah (lit. "*ephah of leanness,*" E.M.) *which* is *abominable?* Scant itself, and, by the just judgment of God, producing scantness, emaciated and emaciating;[4] as He says, *He gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal*

[1] אֵשׁ i.q. יֵשׁ, as in 2 Sam. xiv. 19, the א occurring together with the י (here indicated by the vowel) in Arab. Chald. Syr. Sam. Pers. and Heb. אִיתִי. See note 5, p. 244.

[2] S. James v. 3. [3] Ib. v. 1. [4] See v. 14.

11 * Shall I count *them* pure with [a] the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?

* Or, *Shall I be pure with, &c.* [a] Hosea xii. 7.

into their soul;[1] and S. James,[2] *it shall eat your flesh as it were fire.* Even a heathen said, "Gain gotten by wickedness is loss;"[3] and that, as being "*abominable*" or "accursed" or, one might say, "bewrathed,"[4] lying under the wrath and curse of God. "What they minish from the measure, *that* they add to the wrath of God and the vengeance which shall come upon them; what is lacking to the measure shall be supplied out of the wrath of God."[5] The Ephah was a corn-measure,[6] containing about six bushels; the rich, in whose house it was, were the sellers; they were the necessaries of life then, which the rich retailers of corn were selling dishonestly, at the price of the lives of the poor.[7] Our subtler ways of sin cheat ourselves, not God. In what ways do not competitive employers use the *scant measure which is accursed?* What else is all our competitive trade, our cheapness, our wealth, but scant measure to the poor, making their wages *lean,* full and overflowing with the wrath of God?

11. *Shall I count them pure?* rather (as E.M.), *Shall I be pure?*[8] The Prophet takes for the time their person and bids them judge themselves in him. If it would defile me, how are ye, with all your other sins, not defiled? All these things were expressly forbidden in the law. *Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have;*[9] and, *Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers*

[1] Ps. cvi. 15. [2] v. 3. [3] Chilon in Diog. Laert. i. 4.
[4] זעומה. [5] Rib. [6] Amos viii. 5.
[7] It seems necessary, I see, in so-called Christian London, to advertise in shops that bread is of its alleged weight.
[8] זכה in Kal is only intransitive. [9] Lev. xix. 35, 36.

12 For the rich men thereof are full of violence,
and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and
[a] their tongue *is* deceitful in their mouth.

[a] Jer. ix. 3, 5, 6, 8.

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weights, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures, a great and a small. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteousness are an abomination unto the Lord thy God.[1] Yet are not these things common even now?

12. *For the rich men thereof,* i.e. *of the city,*[2] *are full of violence.* It had been little, had thieves and robbers lived by violence, but now (as Isaiah at the same time upbraids them) *her princes* were become *companions of thieves.*[3] Not the poor out of distress but the rich out of wantonness and exceeding covetousness and love of luxury, not only did wrong but were *filled,* not so much with riches as *with violence.* Violence is the very meat and drink wherewith they are filled, yea, and wherewith they shall be filled, when it is returned upon their heads.

And the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies. Fraud is itself lying, and lying is its inseparable companion. "Lying followeth the gathering together of riches, and the hard wont to lay up riches hath a deceitful tongue."[4] The sin, he saith, is spread throughout all *her inhabitants;* i.e. all of them, as their wont, have spoken lies, and, even when they speak not, the lie is ready; *their tongue is deceitful* (lit. *deceit*) *in their mouth.* It is *deceit,* nothing but deceit, and *that, deceit* which should "overthrow"[5] and ruin others. One

[1] Deut. xxv. 13, 15, 16, add Prov. xi. 1; xvi. 11; xx. 10.
[2] Ver. 9. [3] Isa. i. 23. [4] S. Jer.
[5] רַמִּיָּה from רמה. It is used of the tongue in Ps. lii. 4; ci. 7; cxx. 2, 3; of a bow, Ps. lxxviii. 57; Hosea vii. 16.

13 Therefore also will I [a] make *thee* sick in smiting thee, in making *thee* desolate because of thy sins.

14 [b] Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied; and thy

[a] Lev. xxvi. 16; Ps. cvii. 17.
[b] Lev. xxvi. 26; Hosea iv. 10.

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intent on gain has the lie ever ready to be uttered, even when he speaks not. It lurks concealed until it is needed.

13. *Therefore also will I* [lit. *And I too*], i.e. this dost thou, and thus will I too do. "As thou madest sick the heart of the poor oppressed, so will I, by My grievous and severe punishments, *make thee sick*," [1] or *make thy wound incurable*, as in Nahum,[2] *thy wound is grievous*, lit. *made sick*. *In making thee desolate because of thy sins.* The heaping up riches shall itself be the cause of thy being waste, deserted, desolate.

14. *Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied.* The correspondence of the punishment with the sin shall show that it is not by chance, but from the just judgment of God. The curse of God shall go with what they eat, and it shall not nourish them. The word *thou* is thrice repeated.[3] As God had just said, *I too*, so here, *Thou*. *Thou*, the same who hast plundered others, *shalt* thyself *eat, and not be satisfied*; "*thou* shalt sow, and not reap; *thou* shalt tread the olive, and thou shalt not anoint thee with oil." "Upon extreme but ill-gotten abundance there followeth extreme want. And whoso," adds one,[4] "seeth not this in our ways and our times is absolutely blind. For in no period have we ever read that there was so much gold and silver, or so much discomfort and indigence, so that those most true words of Christ Jesus seem to have been especially spoken of us, *Take heed, for*

[1] Poc. [2] iii. 19.
[3] אתה once in v. 14, twice in v. 15.
[4] Arias Montanus, a Spaniard. His Commentary on the Minor Prophets was published at Antwerp 1571.

casting down *shall be* in the midst of thee; and thou shalt take hold, but shalt not deliver; and

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a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."[1] And is not this true of us now?

Thy casting down shall be in the midst of thee. Where thou hast laid up thy treasures, or rather thy wickedness, there thou shalt *sink down*, or give way, from inward decay, in the very centre of thy wealth and thy sin. They had said, *Is not the Lord in the midst of us? None evil can come upon us.*[2] Micah tells them of a different indweller. God had departed from them, and left them to their inherent nothingness. God had been their stay; without God, human strength collapses. Scarcely any destruction is altogether hopeless, save that which cometh from within. Most storms pass over, tear off boughs and leaves, but the stem remains. Inward decay or excision alone are humanly irrecoverable. The political death of the people was, in God's hands, to be the instrument of their regeneration.

Morally, too, and at all times, inward emptiness is the fruit of unrighteous fulness. It is disease, not strength; as even heathen proverbs said, "the love of money is a dropsy; to drink increaseth the thirst," and "amid mighty wealth, poor"; and Holy Scripture, *The rich He sendeth empty away.*[3] And truly they must be empty. For what can fill the soul, save God? "This is true too of such as, like the Bishop of Sardis, [4]*have a name that they live and are dead*,"[5] "such as do some things good, feed on the word of God, but attain to no fruit of righteousness;"[6] "who corrupt natural and seeming good by inward decay; who appear righteous before men, are active and zealous for good ends, but spoil all by

[1] S. Luke xii. 15. [2] iii. 11.
[3] S. Luke i. 53, comp. 1 Sam. ii. 5. [4] Rev. iii. 1.
[5] Rib. [6] Dion.

that which thou deliverest will I give up to the sword.

15 Thou shalt [a] sow, but thou shalt not reap;

[a] Deut. xxviii. 38, 39, 40; Amos v. 11; Zeph. i. 13: Hag. i. 6.

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some secret sin or wrong end, as vain-glory or praise of men, whereby they lose the praise of God." *Their casting down shall be in the midst of* them. The meaning of the whole is the same, whether the word be rendered *casting down*, i.e. downfall (lit. *sinking down* [1]), or *emptiness*, especially of the stomach, perhaps from the feeling of "sinking."

Thou shalt take hold to rescue or *remove* to a safe place from the enemy, those whom he would take from thee, *but shalt not* wholly *deliver; and that which thou deliverest* for a time, *will I give up to the sword*, i.e. the children for whose sake they pleaded that they got together this wealth; as, now too, the idols, for whose sake men toil wrongly all their life, are often suddenly taken away. Their goods too may be said to be *given to the sword*, i.e. to the enemy.

15. *Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap.* Micah renews the threatenings of the law,[2] which they had been habitually breaking. Those prophecies had been fulfilled before, throughout their history; they had been fulfilled lately in Israel for the like oppression of the poor.[3] Their frequent fulfilment spoke as much of a law of God's righteousness, punishing sin, as the yearly supply in the ordinary course of nature spoke of His loving Providence. It is the bitterest punishment to the covetous to have the things which they

[1] It is possible, as Gesenius conjectures, that יִשַּׁח (a ἅπ. λεγ.) is a transposed form of the Arab. وحش; more probably it may be from the biliteral שׁח, which gave rise to the other forms, שׁוח, שׁחח.

[2] Lev. xxvi. 16; Deut. xxviii. 30, 38–41. [3] Amos v. 11.

thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil; and sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine.

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coveted taken away before their eyes; it was a token of God's Hand that He took them away when just within their grasp. The Prophet brings it before their eyes that they might feel beforehand the bitterness of forgetting them. "They should lose, not only what they gained unjustly, but the produce of their labour, care, industry, as, in agriculture, it is said that there is mostly much labour, little fraud, much benefit."[1] Harvest is a proverb for joy; *they joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest;*[2] *wine maketh glad the heart of man, and oil is to make him a cheerful countenance.*[3] But the harvest shall be turned into sorrow,[4] the oil and wine shall be taken away, when all the labour had been employed. Yet, since all these operations in nature are adapted to be, and are used as symbols of things spiritual, then the words which describe them are adapted to be spiritual proverbs. Spiritually, "*he soweth and reapeth not, who*[5] *soweth to the flesh, and of the flesh reapeth corruption,* things corruptible, and inward decay and condemnation. He *treadeth the olive,* who, by shameful deeds contrary to the law, *grieveth the Holy Spirit of God,*[6] and therefore obtaineth not gladness of spirit; he maketh *wine, yet drinketh not wine,* who teacheth others, not himself."[7] They too *take hold but do not deliver,* who *for a while believe and in time of temptation fall away,* who repent for a while and then fall back into old sins, or in other ways *bring no fruit to perfection;* taking up the Cross for a while and then wearying; using religious practices, as more frequent prayer or fasting, and then

[1] Mont. [2] Isa. ix. 3. [3] Ps. civ. 15.
[4] Comp. Isa. xvi. 9, 10; Jer. v. 17; xlviii. 37.
[5] Gal. vi. 8. [6] Eph. iv. 30. [7] Theoph.

16 ¶ For * the statutes of [a] Omri are [b] kept, and

* Or, *he doth much keep the, &c.*

[a] 1 Kings xvi. 25, 26. [b] Hosea v. 11.

tiring ; cultivating some graces and then despairing because they see not the fruits. These tread the olive, but are not anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit of grace, who "end by doing for the sake of man, what they had thought to do out of the love for God, and abandon, for some fear of man, the good which they had begun." [1]

16. *For the statutes of Omri are kept*, rather (like E.M. *he doth much keep*) *And he doth keep diligently for himself.* Both ways express much diligence in evil.[2] To "keep God's commandments" was the familiar phrase, in which Israel was exhorted, by every motive of hope and fear, to obedience to God. *I know him*, God says of Abraham, *that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do judgment and justice.*[3] This was the fundamental commandment immediately after the deliverance from Egypt upon their first murmuring. *The Lord made there* (at Marah) *for them a statute and ordinance, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians.*[4] In this character He revealed Himself on Mount Sinai, as *shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.*[5] This was their covenant, *Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God and to walk*

[1] Rib.

[2] In the construction of the E.V. (which is possible) the force of the union of the singular verb with the plural noun would be that "the statutes of Omri, one and all, are kept diligently."

[3] Gen. xviii. 19. [4] Exod. xv. 25, 26. [5] Ib. xx. 6.

all the works of the house of [a] Ahab, and ye walk

[a] 1 Kings xvi. 30, &c., and xxi. 25, 26; 2 Kings xxi. 3.

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in His ways, and to keep His statutes and His commandments and His judgments and to hearken unto His voice.[1] This was so often enforced upon them in the law, as the condition upon which they should hold their land, if they kept *the covenant,*[2] *the commandments,*[3] *the judgments,*[4] *the statutes,*[5] *the testimonies,*[6] *the charge*[7] of the Lord. Under this term all the curses of the law were threatened, if they *hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord* their *God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which* He *commanded* them.[8] Under this again the future of good and evil was, in Solomon, set before the house of David; of unbroken succession on his throne, if [9] *thou wilt keep My commandments;* but contrariwise, *if ye or your children will not keep My commandments and My statutes,* banishment, destruction of the temple, and themselves to be *a proverb and a byword among all people.*[10] This was the object of their existence, *that they might keep His statutes and observe His laws.*[11] This was the summary of their disobedience, *they kept not the covenant of God.*[12] And now was come the contrary to all this. They had *not* kept

[1] Deut. xxvi. 17.

[2] Exod. xix. 5; *the words of this covenant,* Deut. xxix. 9.

[3] הַמִּצְוָה or כָּל הַמִּצְוָה, or מִצְוֹת יי, Lev. xxii. 31; xxvi. 3; Deut. iv. 2; vi. 17; vii. 11; viii. 6, 11; x. 13; xi. 1, 8, 22; xiii. 5; Heb. 19; xv. 5; xix. 9; xxvii. 1; xxviii. 9; xxx. 10.

[4] מִשְׁפָּטִי, Lev. xviii. 5, 26; xx. 22; Deut. vii. 11; viii. 11; xi. 1.

[5] חֻקּוֹת or חֻקִּים, Lev. xviii. 5, 26; xx. 8, 22; Deut. iv. 40; vi. 17; vii. 11; x. 13; xi. 1; xxx. 10.

[6] עֵדוֹת, Deut. vi. 17.

[7] מִשְׁמֶרֶת, Lev. xviii. 30; Deut. xi. 1.

[8] Deut. xxviii. 15. [9] 1 Kings ix. 4–6.

[10] Ib. ix. 7. [11] Ps. cv. 45. [12] Ib. lxxviii. 10.

the commandments of *God;* and those commandments of man which were the most contrary to the commandments of God, they *had* kept and did keep diligently. Alas! that the Christian world should be so like them! What iron habit or custom of man, what fashion, is not kept, if it is against the law of God? How few are not more afraid of man than God! Had God's command run, *Speak evil one of another, brethren,* would it not have been the best kept of all His commandments? God says, *speak not evil;* custom, the conversation around, fear of man, say, *speak evil;* man's commandment is kept; God's is not kept. And no one repents or makes restitution; few even cease from the sin.

Scripture does not record what was the special aggravation of the sin of Omri, since the accursed worship of Baal was brought in by Ahab,[1] his son. But, as usual, "like father, like son." The son developed the sins of his father. Some special sinfulness of Omri is implied, in that Athaliah, the murderess of her children, is called after her grandfather, Omri, not after her father, Ahab.[2] Heresiarchs have a deeper guilt than their followers, although the heresy itself is commonly developed later. Omri settled for a while the kingdom of Israel, after the anarchy which followed on the murder of Elah, and slew Zimri, his murderer. Yet before God, *he did worse than all before him, and he walked in all the way of Jeroboam.*[3] Yet this too did not suffice Judah; for it follows, *And all the doings of the house of Ahab,* who again *did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him and served Baal;*[4] Ahab, to whom none *was like* in sin, *who did*

[1] The worship of Baal was the result of Ahab's marriage with *Jezebel, the daughter* of one, whose name designates his devotedness to that idolatry, *Ethbaal* (i.e. "with the help of Baal"). And this marriage is spoken of as Ahab's act, not his father's. 1 Kings xvi. 31.

[2] 2 Kings viii. 26; 2 Chron. xxii. 2.

[3] 1 Kings xvi. 25, 26.

[4] Ib. xvi. 30–33.

in their counsels; that I should make thee [a] a

[a] 1 Kings ix. 8; Jer. xix. 8.

sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord.[1] These were they whose statutes Judah now kept, as diligently and accurately as if it had been a religious act. They kept not *the statutes of the Lord*, but *the statutes of Omri;* they kept, as their pattern before their eyes, *all the doings of the house of Ahab*, his luxury, oppression, the bloodshedding of Naboth; and they *walked* onward, not, as God bade them, *humbly with Him*, but *in their counsels.* And what must be the end of all this? *that I should make thee a desolation.* They acted as though the very end and object of all their acts were *that*, wherein they ended, their own destruction and reproach.[2]

Therefore ye shall bear the reproach of My people. The title of *the people of God* must be a glory or a reproach. Judah had gloried in being God's people, outwardly, by His covenant and protection; they were envied for the outward distinction. They refused to be so inwardly, and gave themselves to the hideous, desecrating, worship of Baal. Now then what had been their pride, should be the aggravation of their punishment. *Now* too we hear of people everywhere zealous for a system, which their deeds belie. Faith, without love (such as their character had been), feels any insult to the relation of God, which by its deeds it disgraces. Though they had themselves neglected God, yet it was a heavy burden to them to *bear* the triumph of the heathen over them, that God was unable to help them, or had cast them off. *These are the people of the Lord and are gone forth out of His land.*[3] *Wherefore should they say among the heathen, where is their God?*[4] *We are confounded, because we have heard reproach, shame hath covered our faces, for strangers are come*

[1] 1 Kings xxi. 25.
[2] See on Hosea viii. 4.
[3] Ezek. xxxvi. 20.
[4] Joel ii. 17.

* desolation, and the inhabitants thereof an hissing: therefore ye shall bear the [a] reproach of my people.

* Or, *astonishment.*
[a] Isa. xxv. 8; Jer. li. 51; Lam. v. 1.

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into the sanctuaries of the Lord's house.[1] *We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.*[2] *Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us. Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people. My confusion is daily before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me, for the voice of him that slandereth and blasphemeth, by reason of the enemy and the avenger.*[3]

The words, *the reproach of My people*, may also include "the reproach wherewith God in the law[4] threatened His people if they should forsake Him,"[5] which indeed comes to the same thing, the one being the prophecy, the other the fulfilment. The word *hissing* in itself recalled the threat to David's house in Solomon: *At this house*, which is *high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished and hiss.*[6] Micah's phrase became a favourite expression of Jeremiah.[7] So only do God's prophets denounce. It is a marvellous glimpse into man's religious history, that faith, although it had been inoperative and was trampled upon without, should still survive; nay, that God, Whom in prosperity they had forsaken and forgotten, should be remembered, when He seemed to forget and to forsake them. Had the captive Jews abandoned their faith, the reproach would have ceased. The words, *ye shall bear the reproach of My*

[1] Jer. li. 51.
[2] Ps. lxxix. 4.
[3] Ps. xliv. 13–16.
[4] Deut. xxviii. 36.
[5] Rib. and others in Poc.
[6] 1 Kings ix. 8.
[7] שִׁמָּמָה, Jer. li. 37; לְשִׁמָּמָה, Jer. xix. 8; xxv. 9, 18; xxix. 18. Else it is only used by Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxix. 8.

CHAPTER VII

1 *The church, complaining of her small number,* 3 *and the general corruption,* 5 *putteth her confidence not in man, but in God.* 8 *She triumpheth over her enemies.* 14 *God comforteth her by promises,* 16 *by confusion of the enemies,* 18 *and by his mercies.*

WOE is me! for I am as * when they have gathered

* Heb. *the gatherings of summer.*

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people are, at once, a prediction of their deserved suffering for the profanation of God's Name by their misdeeds, and of their perseverance in that faith which, up to that time, they had mostly neglected.

CHAP. VII. The Prophet's office of threatening woe is now over. Here, out of love, he himself crieth woe unto himself. He hath *continual sorrow in heart*[1] for his people. He bewails what he cannot amend, and, by bewailing, shows them how much more they should bewail it, over whose sins he sorrows; how certain the destruction is, since there is none to stand in the gap and turn away the wrath of God, no "ten righteous," for whose sake the city may be spared. "These words flow out of the fount of pity, because the good zeal, wherewith the holy seem to speak severely, is never without pity. They are wroth with the sins, they sympathise with the sinner."[2] So Isaiah mourned for the judgment, which he prophesied against the world, *Woe is me!*[3] he sorrowed even for Moab;[4] and Joel, *Alas for the day!*[5] and Jeremiah, in that exclamation of impassioned sorrow: *Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole world!*[6]

[1] Rom. ix. 2. [2] Rup. [3] Isa. xxiv. 16.
[4] Ib. xv. 5; xvi. 11. [5] Joel i. 15. [6] Jer. xv. 10.

the summer fruits, as [a] the grapegleanings of the vintage: *there is* no cluster to eat: [b] my soul desired the firstripe fruit.

[a] Isa. xvii. 6 and xxiv. 13. [b] Isa. xxviii. 4; Hosea ix. 10.

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1. *Woe*[1] *is me! for I am, as when they have gathered the summer fruits,*[2] *as the grape-gleanings of the vintage. The vineyard of the Lord of hosts*, Isaiah said at the same time,[3] is *the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plants.* Isaiah said *it brought forth wild grapes;* Micah, that there are but gleanings, few and poor. It is as though Satan pressed the vineyard of the Lord, and made the most of his prey, and few were left to those who glean for Christ; *the foxes have eaten the grapes.*[4] Some few remain too high out of their reach, or hidden behind the leaves, or, it may be, "falling in the time of gathering, fouled, sullied, marred, and stained, yet left."[5] So in the gleaning there may be three sorts of souls; *two or three in the top of the uppermost bough,*[6] which were not touched; or those unripe, which are but imperfect and poor; or those who had fallen, yet were not wholly carried away. These too are all sought with difficulty; they had escaped the

[1] אַלַּי. The word occurs besides only in Job x. 15, but it is the cry of nature. Among the Greeks it is chiefly of joy or triumph, but of sorrow too; in Latin chiefly of sorrow, "ululo," our "howl."

[2] Lit. as *the gatherings of the* fig-*harvest.* It is one of those concise comparisons which have to be filled up. In prose it would be, "I am as one who, at the gatherings of the fig-harvest, should still look for fruit on the trees." The meaning, "summer" (E.M.), is doubtless a secondary sense of the word, resulting from the fact that the main fig-harvest was about the summer solstice.

[3] Isa. v. 7.

[4] Cant. ii. 15.

[5] Poc. from Tanch.

[6] Isa. xvii. 6.

2 The [a] * good *man* is perished out of the earth:

[a] Ps. xii. 1 and xiv. 1, 3; Isa. lvii. 1.
* Or, *godly*, or, *merciful*.

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gatherer's eye, they are few and rare; it might seem at first sight as though there were none. *There is no cluster to eat;* for the vintage is past, the best is but as a sour grape which sets the teeth on edge. *My soul desired the first-ripe fig.*[1] These are they which, having survived the sharpness of winter, ripen early, about the end of June; they are the sweetest;[1] but he longed for them in vain. He addressed a carnal people, who could understand only carnal things on the side which they *could* understand. Our longings, though we pervert them, are God's gift. As they desired those things which refresh or recruit the thirsty body, as their whole self was gathered into the craving for that which was to restore them, so was it with him. Such is the longing of God for man's conversion and salvation; such is the thirst of His ministers; such their pains in seeking, their sorrow in not finding. "There were none, through whose goodness the soul of the prophet might spiritually be refreshed, in joy at his growth in grace, as S. Paul saith to Philemon, *refresh my bowels in the Lord.*[2] So our Lord saith in Isaiah, *I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain.*[3] [4] *Jesus was grieved at the hardness of their hearts.*" [5]

"The first-ripe fig may be the image of the righteous of old, as the Patriarchs or the Fathers, such as in the later days we fain would see." [6]

2. *The good* [or *godly*, or *merciful*, E.M.] *man.* The

[1] The *bikkurah, boccore, Albacora* (Span.). See Shaw's Travels, p. 370. Its goodness was proverbial. See Hosea ix. 10; Isa. xxviii. 4; Jer. xxiv. 2.
[2] Philem. 20. [3] Isa. xlix. 4. [4] S. Mark iii. 5.
[5] Dion. [6] From Rib.

and *there is* none upright among men; they all lie in wait for blood; [a] they hunt every man his brother with a net.

[a] Hab. i. 15.

Hebrew word contains all. It is "he who loveth tenderly and piously" God, for His own sake, and man, for the sake of God. Mercy was probably chiefly intended, since it was to this that the Prophet had exhorted,[1] and the sins which he proceeds to speak of, are against this. But imaginary love of God without love of man, or love of man without the love of God, is mere self-deceit. *Is perished out of the earth*, i.e. by an untimely death.[2] *The good* had either been withdrawn by God *from the evil to come*,[3] or had been cut off by those who *laid wait for blood;* in which case their death brought a double evil, through the guilt which such sin contracted, and then, through the loss of those who might be an example to others, and whose prayers God would hear. The loving and *upright*, all, who were men of mercy and truth, had ceased. They who were left, *all lie in wait for blood*, lit. *bloods*,[4] i.e. bloodshedding; *all*, as far as man can see; as Elijah complains that he was left alone. Amid the vast number of the wicked, the righteous were as though they were not. Isaiah, at the same time, complains of the like sins, and that it was as though there were none righteous: *Your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor* any *pleadeth for truth.*[5] Indirectly, or directly, they

[1] חסד vi. 8, חסיד vii. 2. [2] אבד.

[3] Isa. lvii. 1, where אבד is, in like way, used.

[4] See Hosea v. 2 and Micah iii. 10, *They build up Zion with bloods.* Isaiah says in like way, *Your hands are full of bloods*, i. 15. [5] Isa. lix. 2, 3.

3 ¶ That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, [a] the prince asketh, [b] and the judge *asketh* for a reward; and the great *man*, he uttereth * his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up.

[a] Hosea iv. 18. [b] Isa. i. 23; Micah iii. 11.

* Heb. *the mischief of his soul.*

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destroyed life.[1] To violence they add treachery. The good and *loving* had perished, and all is now violence; the upright had ceased, and all now is deceit. *They hunt every man his brother with a net.* Every man is the brother of every man, because he is man, born of the same first parent, children of the same Father: yet they lay wait for one another, as hunters for wild beasts.[2]

3. *That they may do evil with both hands earnestly* [lit. *upon evil both hands to do well*], i.e. "both their hands are upon evil to do it well," or "earnestly,"[3] as our translation gives the meaning; only the Hebrew expresses more, that evil is their good, and their good or excellence is in evil. Bad men gain a dreadful skill and wisdom in evil, as Satan has; and cleverness in evil is their delight. "They call the evil of their hands good."[4] *The prince asketh, and the judge* asketh (or, it may more readily be supplied, *judgeth*, doth that which is his office), against right *for a reward* (which was strictly forbidden[5]), *and the great man he uttereth*

[1] See on Micah iii. 10.

[2] Comp. Ps. xxxv. 7; lvii. 7; cxl. 6; Jer. v. 26.

[3] הֵיטֵב, like our "do it well," can signify "do it thoroughly"; yet not so as to supersede the idea of its being "done well" in the mind of the actor. The two cases cited to the contrary, the thorough destruction of the calf (Deut. ix. 21), and of the house of Baal (2 Kings xi. 18), were, of course, good acts. So to "search well," Deut. xvii. 4; xix. 18.

[4] S. Jer. [5] Deut. xvi. 19. See Micah iii. 11.

4 The best of them [a] *is* as a brier: the most upright *is sharper* than a thorn hedge: the day of thy watchmen *and* thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity.

[a] 2 Sam. xxiii. 6, 7; Ezek. ii. 6. See Isa. lv. 13.

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his mischievous desire (or *the desire of his soul*). Even the show of good is laid aside; whatever the heart conceives and covets, it utters;—mischief to others and in the end to itself. The mischief comes forth from the soul, and returns upon it. The *elders and nobles in the city*,[1] as well as Ahab, took part (as one instance) in the murder of Naboth. The *great* man, however, here, is rather the source of the evil, which he induces others to effect; so that as many as there were great, so many sources were there of oppression. All, prince, judges, the great, unite in the ill, and this not once only, but they are ever doing it,[2] and *so they wrap it up* (lit. twist,[3] intertwine it). Things are twisted either to strengthen or to pervert or intricate them. It might mean they *strengthen* it, that which their soul covets against the poor, or they *pervert* it, the cause of the poor.

4. *The best of them is as a brier;* the gentlest of them is a thorn,[4] strong, hard, piercing, which letteth nothing unresisting pass by but it taketh from it, "robbing the

[1] 1 Kings xxi. 8, 11.

[2] The force of the partic. שׁוֹאֵל, דֹּבֵר.

[3] עָבַת, the verb, is a ἅπ. λεγ. What remains of the root has the meaning of "twisted" (in עָבֹת, "a rope") or "entangled" (in עָבֹת, עֲבֹת, "thick boughs").

[4] The Heb. חֵדֶק seems to have been different from the Arab., which is a "solanum" (Cels. Hierob. ii. 35), but Prov. xv. 19 (where it occurs besides) shows that it served as a hedge.

5 ¶ [a] Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.

[a] Jer. ix. 4.

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fleece, and wounding the sheep." *The most upright*, those who, in comparison of others still worse, seem so, *is sharper than a thorn hedge* (lit. *the upright, than a thorn hedge*). They are not like it only, but worse, and that in all ways; none is specified, and so none excepted; they were more crooked, more tangled, sharper. Both, as hedges, were set for protection; both, turned to injury. "So that, where you would look for help, thence comes suffering."[1] And if such be the best, what the rest?

The day of thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh. When all, even the good, are thus corrupted, the iniquity is full. Nothing now hinders the *visitation* which the *watchmen*, or prophets, had so long foreseen and forewarned of. *Now shall be their perplexity;*[2] *now*, without delay; for the day of destruction ever breaketh suddenly upon the sinner. *When they say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them.*[3] *Whose destruction cometh suddenly at an instant.*[4] They had perplexed the cause of the oppressed; they themselves were tangled together, intertwined in mischief, as a thorn-hedge. They should be caught in their own snare; they had perplexed their paths and should find no outlet.

5, 6. *Trust ye not in a friend.* It is part of the perplexity

[1] S. Jer.

[2] In the Hebrew the two words "mesucah," "thorn hedge," and "mebucah," "perplexity," are alike in sound.

[3] 1 Thess. v. 3.

[4] See Isa. xxx. 13; comp. 2 Peter ii. 1, "swift destruction"; Prov. i. 27, "cometh as a whirlwind"; Ps. xxxv. 8, "unawares."

6 For [a] the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter

[a] Ezek. xxii. 7; Matt. x. 21, 35, 36; Luke xii. 53 and xxi. 16; 2 Tim. iii. 2, 3.

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of crooked ways, that all relationships are put out of joint. Selfishness rends each from the other, and disjoints the whole frame of society. Passions and sin break every band of friendship, kindred, gratitude, nature. "Every one *seeketh his own*." Times of trial and of outward harass increase this; so that God's visitations are seasons of the most frightful recklessness as to everything but self. So had God foretold;[1] so it was in the siege of Samaria,[2] and in that of Jerusalem both by the Chaldeans[3] and by the Romans.[4] When the soul has lost the love of God all other is but seeming love, since *natural affection* is from Him, and it too dies out, as God gives the soul over to itself.[5] The words describe partly the inward corruption, partly the outward causes which shall call it forth. There is no real trust in any, where all are corrupt. The outward straitness and perplexity, in which they shall be, makes *that* to crumble and fall to pieces, which was inwardly decayed and severed before. The words deepen as they go on. First, *the friend*, or neighbour, the common band of man and man; then *the guide* (or, as the word also means, one *familiar*, united by intimacy, to whom, by continual intercourse, the soul was *used*); then the wife who lay in the bosom, nearest to the secrets of the heart; then those to whom all reverence is due, *father* and *mother*. Our Lord said that this should be fulfilled in the hatred of His Gospel. He begins His warning as to it with a caution like that of the Prophet: *Be ye wise as serpents*, and *beware of men*.[6] Then

[1] Deut. xxviii. 53. [2] 2 Kings vi. 28. [3] Lam. iv. 3–16.
[4] Jos. B. J. vi. 3, 8. [5] Rom. i. 28. [6] S. Matt. x. 16, 17.

in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies *are* the men of his own house.

He says how these words should still be true.[1] There never were wanting pleas of earthly interest against the truth. He Himself was *cut off*, lest *the Romans should take away their place and nation.*[2] The Apostles were accused that they meant to *bring this Man's Blood upon* the chief priests;[3] or as *ringleaders of the sect of the Nazarenes, pestilent fellows and movers of sedition, turning the world upside down, setters up of another king; troublers of the city; commanding things unlawful for Romans to practise; setters forth of strange gods; turning away much people;*[4] endangering not men's craft only, but the honour of their gods; *evil doers.* Truth is against the world's ways, so the world is against it. Holy zeal hates sin, so sinners hate it. It troubles them, so they count it, *one which troubleth Israel.*[5] Tertullian, in a public defence of Christians in the second century, writes: "Truth set out with being herself hated; as soon as she appeared, she is an enemy. As many as are strangers to it, so many are its foes; and the Jews indeed appropriately from their rivalry, the soldiers from their violence, even they of our own household from nature. Each day are we beset, each day betrayed; in our very meetings and assemblies are we mostly surprised."[6] There was no lack of pleas. "A Christian thou deemest a man guilty of every crime, an enemy of the gods, of the Emperors, of law, of morals, of all nature";[7] "factious," "authors of all public calamities through the anger of the heathen gods,"

[1] S. Matt. x. 21, 35, 36. [2] S. John xi. 48. [3] Acts v. 28.
[4] Acts xxiv. 5; xvi. 20, 21; xvii. 6, 7, 18; 1 Peter ii. 12.
[5] 1 Kings xviii. 17. [6] Tert. Apol. c. 7, p. 17, Oxf. Tr.
[7] Ib. c. 2, p. 7, O. T. c. 7, 38, 10 (and note *k*, Oxf. Tr), 24, 28, 40, and notes *e*, *f*; ad Scap. c. 2.

7 Therefore [a] I will look unto the LORD; I will

[a] Isa. viii. 17.

"impious," "atheists," "disloyal," "public enemies." The Jews, in the largest sense of the word *they of their own household*, were ever the deadliest enemies of Christians, the inventors of calumnies, the authors of persecutions. "What other race," says Tertullian,[1] "is the seed-plot of our calumnies?" Then the Acts of the Martyrs tell how Christians were betrayed by near kinsfolk for private interest or for revenge, because they would not join in things unlawful. "[2] So many are the instances in daily life [of the daughter rising against the mother], that we should rather mourn that they are so many, than seek them out." —"I seek no examples [of those of a man's own household being his foes], they are too many, that we should have any need of witness." "Yet ought we not, on account of these and like words of Holy Scripture, to be mistrustful or suspicious, or alway to presume the worst, but to be cautious and prudent For Holy Scripture speaketh with reference to times, causes, persons, places."[3] So S. John saith, *Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God.*[4]

7. *Therefore* (*And*) when all these things come to pass and all human help fails, *I*, for my part, *will look unto* (lit. *on*) *the Lord* God, the Unchangeable. The Prophet sets himself, *I*, with emphasis, against the multitude of the ungodly. When all forsake, betray, fail, when *love* is *waxed cold*,[5] and men, in the last days, shall be *lovers of their own*

[1] Tert. ad Nat. i. 24. "The most atrocious calumnies against the Christians," S. Justin M. says, "were invented and circulated from country to country by the Jews." Apol. i. 49. See also Dial c. Tryph. § 16. 108, Orig. c. Cels. vi. 27.

[2] S. Jer.

[3] Dion.

[4] 1 John iv. 1.

[5] S. Matt. xxiv. 12.

wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

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selves, not *lovers of God*,[1] I,—he does not say "will trust," but—*will*, "with the eye of the heart contemplating, loving, venerating God most High, and weighing His mercy and justice,"[2] *gaze intently*[3] with the devotion of faith toward Him, though I see Him not: yet so too I will rest *in* Him[4] and *on* Him, as the eyes are wont to rest in trust and love and dependence, and as, on the other hand, the Eyes of God[5] *espy into* man and dwell *on* him, never leaving him unbeheld. I will *espy* Him, although from afar, with the eyes of the soul, as a watchman (the word is the same) looking for His Coming and announcing it to others; and until He comes, *I will wait* [*I would wait*] with trust unbroken by any troubles or delay, as Job saith, *Though He slay me, yet will I put my trust in Him.*[6] The word is almost appropriated to a longing waiting for God.[7] *For the God*

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 2, 4. [2] Dion.

[3] אֲצַפֶּה, intensive (as in Ps. v. 4), "will espy intently," as towards that which can be seen only by intent gazing; and with ב pers. "so as to dwell *upon*."

[4] Comp. Ps. xxv. 15; cxxiii. 1; cxli. 8.

[5] Ps. lxvi. 7. [6] Job xiii. 15.

[7] אוחילה ל, as in Ps. xxxviii. 16; xlii. 6, 12; xliii. 5; cxxx. 5; 2 Kings vi. 33; Lam. iii. 24. יחל is almost appropriated to one who so *waiteth* for God. Abs. Hifil, Lam. iii. 21; Pi. Job vi. 11; xiv. 14; Ps. lxxi. 14. יחיל, adj., Lam. iii. 26, and Prop. Name "Waiter" on God, as expressed in יחלאל. Pi. with ל, Ps. xxxi. 25; xxxiii. 22; lxix. 4; with אל, of God, Ps. cxxx. 7; cxxxi. 3; with ל, of the *word* of God, Ps. cxix. 74, 81, 114, 147; of His *mercy*, Ps. xxxiii. 18, cxlvii. 11; of His *judgments*, Ps. cxix. 43; of His *Arm*, Isa. li. 5; of His *law*, Isa. xlii. 4. Transitively, Ps. cxix. 49. So תוחלת, abs. Prov. x. 28; Lam. iii. 18; with ל, Ps. xxxix. 8.

of my salvation. This too became a wonted title of God,[1] a title speaking of past deliverances as well as of confidence and of hope. Deliverance and salvation are bound up with God, and that, in man's personal experience. It is not only "Saviour God," but "God, *my* Saviour," Thou who hast been, art, and wilt be, my God, my saving God. It is a prelude to the name of Jesus, our Redeeming God. *The Lord will hear me.* His purpose of waiting on God he had expressed wistfully. *I would wait;*[2] for man's longing trust must be upheld by God. Of God's mercy he speaks confidently, *the Lord will hear me*, He, Who is ever "more ready to hear than we to pray." He has no doubts, but, as Abraham said, *the Lord will provide*,[3] so he, *The Lord will hear me.* So, when Jehoshaphat prayed, *We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes* are *upon Thee;*[4] God answered by the Prophet, *Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.* Micah unites with himself all the faithful as one, "in the unity of the spirit," wherein all are one band, looking, waiting, praying for His Coming in His kingdom. "God is our only refuge and asylum in things desperate, and rejoices to help in them, in order to show His supreme Power and Goodness especially to those who believe, hope, and ask it. Therefore all mistrust and despondency is then to be supremely avoided, and a certain hope and confidence in God is to be elicited. This will call forth the

[1] "God of *my* salvation" (ישעי), Ps. xviii. 47 (2 Sam. xxii. 47); xxv. 5; xxvii. 9; Hab. iii. 18. "God, my salvation," Ps. lxii. 8. "God of our salvation," Ps. lxv. 5; lxxix. 9; lxxxv. 5. "God of thy salvation," Isa. xvii. 10. "God of his salvation," Ps. xxiv. 5. "Rock of our salvation," Ps. xcv. 1.

[2] אוחילה, optat.

[3] Gen. xxii. 8, 14.

[4] 2 Chron. xx. 12, 15.

8 ¶ [a] Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy:

[a] Prov. xxiv. 17; Lam. iv. 21.

help of God assuredly, yea though it were by miracle, as to Lot in Sodom, to Moses and the people from Pharaoh, to David from Saul, to Hezekiah from Sennacherib, to the Maccabees from Antiochus. This our proverbs express,[1] how God aids, when there is least sign of it."[2]

8. *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy.* The Prophet still more makes himself one with the people, not only as looking for God, but in penitence, as Daniel bewails *his own sins and the sins of his people.*[3] The *enemy* is Babylon and Edom;[4] and then, in all times (since this was written for all times, and the relations of the people of God and of its enemies are the same), whosoever, whether devils or evil men, rejoice over the falls of God's people. *Rejoice not;* for thou hast no real cause; *the triumphing of the ungodly,* and the fall of the godly, *is but for a moment.*[5] *When I fall, I shall arise* (lit. *when I have fallen, I have arisen*); expressing both the certainty and speed of the recovery. To fall[6] and to arise is one. "[7] The fall of infirmity is not grave, if free from the desire of the will. Have the will to rise, He is at hand Who will cause thee to rise." "[8] Though I have sinned, Thou forgivest the sin; though I have fallen, thou raisest up; lest they, who rejoice in the sins of others, should have occasion to exult. For

[1] Deus ex machinâ. [2] Lap. [3] Dan. ix. 10.
[4] Obad. 10, 12; Ps. cxxxvii. 7. [5] Ps. xxx. 5.

[6] נפל is used of the fall of a people, Amos v. 2; viii. 14; Isa. xxi. 9; Jer. li. 8; of a king and his people, 2 Kings xiv. 10; of many individuals, Isa. viii. 15. In Prov. xxiv. 16, it is used of the fall of the righteous, from which he shall rise, in contrast with the stumbling (יכשלו) of the wicked, without recovery.

[7] S. Ambr. in Ps. 37 [38 Eng.] v. 15. [8] Ib. v. 47.

[a] when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, [b] the LORD *shall be* a light unto me.

[a] Ps. xxxvii. 24; Prov. xxiv. 16. [b] Ps. xxvii. 1.

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we who have sinned more, have gained more; for Thy grace maketh more blessed than our own innocence."

When I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. "[1] He does not say 'lie,' but *sit*; she was not as one dead, without hope of life, but she sat solitary as a widow, helpless, unable to restore herself, yet waiting for God's time. The darkness of the captivity was lightened by the light of the prophetic grace which shone through Daniel and Ezekiel, and by the faithfulness of the three children, and the brightness of Divine glory shed abroad through them, when Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed to all people that their God was *God of gods and Lord of kings*,[2] and that none should *speak any thing amiss against Him*.[3] Still more when, at the close of the captivity, they were delivered from sorrow, trouble, bondage, death, to joy, rest, freedom, life. Yet how much more in Christ (for Whom this deliverance prepared) when *the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined*.[4] *God is not only our light*, as "restoring us" outwardly "to gladness, freedom, happiness, whereof light is a symbol, as darkness is of sorrow, captivity, adversity, death."[5] Scripture speaks of God, in a directer way, as being Himself our light. *The Lord is my light*.[6] *The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light*.[7] He calls Himself *The light of Israel*.[8] He is our light, by infusing knowledge, joy, heavenly brightness, in any outward lot. He does not say "after darkness, comes

[1] Mont. [2] Dan. ii. 47. [3] Ib. iii. 29.
[4] Isa. ix. 2. [5] Lap. [6] Ps. xxvii. 1.
[7] Isa. lx. 19. [8] Ib. x. 17.

9 [a] I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because
I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause,

[a] Lam. iii. 39.

light," but *when I shall sit in darkness*, then, *the Lord is light unto me.* The *sitting in darkness* is the occasion of the light, in that the soul or the people in sorrow turns to Him Who is their light. In their sin, which was so punished, they were turned away from the light.

9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him.* This is the temper of all penitents when stricken by God, or under chastisement from Him. *It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good.*[1] *So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?*[2] *He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.*[3] The penitent owns the just sentence of God, and, knowing that he deserves far more than God inflicts, is thankful to endure it, until He remove it, *until He plead my cause and execute judgment for me*, i.e. until God Himself think the punishments inflicted enough, and judge between me and those through whose hands they come. The judgments which God righteously sends, and which man suffers righteously from Him, are unrighteously inflicted by those whose malice He overrules, whether it be that of evil men (as the Assyrian or the Chaldean or the Edomite) or of Satan. The close of the chastisements of His people is the beginning of the visible punishment of *their* misdeeds, who used amiss the power which God gave them over it. Whence it is said, *Daughter of Babylon, the wasted! blessed he that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.*[4] But all is of the mercy of God. So He saith, *He shall bring me forth to the*

[1] 1 Sam. iii. 18.
[2] 2 Sam. xvi. 10.
[3] Lam. iii. 29.
[4] Ps. cxxxvii. 8.

and execute judgment for me: [a] he will bring me forth to the light, *and* I shall behold his righteousness.

10 * Then *she that is* mine enemy shall see *it*, and

[a] Ps. xxxvii. 6.

* Or, *And thou wilt see her that is mine enemy, and cover her with shame.*

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light of His Countenance and His favour and His truth. Micah speaks in the name of those who were penitent, and so were forgiven, and yet, in that they were under punishment, seemed to lie under the wrath of God. For, although God remits at once the eternal penalty of sin, yet we see daily how punishment pursues the forgiven sinner, even to the end of life. The light of God's love may not, on grounds which He knoweth, shine unchequered upon him. We should not know the blackness of the offence of sin, and should never know the depth of God's mercy, but for our punishment. The indignation of God toward the penitent is an austere form of His love. So then penitents may well say, in every grief or sickness or visitation or disappointment, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him.* He says, *I shall behold His righteousness*, because they had a righteous cause against man, although not towards God, and God in His just judgment on their enemies showed Himself as the righteous Judge of the world.

10. *Then* [*And*] she that is *mine enemy shall see* it, *and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is He,*[1] He of Whom thou boastest, *the Lord thy God?* The cause of her gladness then is, that the blasphemies of the enemy of God were to cease. This was the bitterest portion of her cup, that they said daily, "*Where is now thy God?* let Him come and save thee;" as though He could not, or as though

[1] אַיֵּה. The pronoun is inserted emphatically.

[a] shame shall cover her which said unto me, [b] Where

[a] Ps. xxxv. 26.
[b] Ps. xlii. 3, 10, lxxix. 10, and cxv. 2; Joel ii. 17.

He loved her not, and she vainly presumed on His help. Even when fallen, it was for *His* sake that she was hated, Who seemed to be overcome in her: as He was hated in His Martyrs, and they asked, "Where is the God of the Christians?"[1] Now the taunt was closed, and turned back on those who used it. The wheel, which they had turned against her, rolled round on themselves. They who had said, *Let our eye look on Zion*, now were ashamed that their hope had failed. *They* had longed to feed their sight *on* her miseries; Zion had her reverent gladness in *gazing* on *the righteousness of God*.[2] Babylon was trodden down by the Medes and Persians, and they whom she had led captive beheld it. Daniel was in the palace when Belshazzar was slain.

The soul of one, who has known the chastenings of God, cannot but read its own history here. The sinful soul is at once the object of the love of God and hath that about it which God hates. God hates the evil in us, even while He loves us, being, or having been, evil. He forgives, but chastens. His displeasure is the channel of His good pleasure. Nathan said to David, *The Lord hath put away thy sin*, but also, *the sword shall never depart from thy house*.[3] It is part of His forgiveness to cleanse the soul with a *spirit of burning*.[4] "It seemeth to me," says S. Jerome, "that *Jerusalem* is every soul, which had been the temple of the Lord, and had had the vision of peace and the knowledge of Scripture, and which afterwards, overcome by

[1] Ep. of Churches of Vienne and Lyons, in Eus. H. E. v. 1 fin.
[2] אראה בצדקתו, ver. 9, corresponding to תראינה בה, v. 10.
[3] 2 Sam. xii. 10, 13. [4] Isa. iv. 4.

is the LORD thy God? [a] mine eyes shall behold

[a] Micah iv. 11.

sins, hath fallen captive by its own consent, parting from that which is right in the sight of God, and allowing itself to sink among the pleasures of the world." So then "captive, and tortured, she saith to Babylon, i.e. the confusion of this world and the power of the enemy which ruleth over the world, and sin, who lordeth it over her, *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise;*" [1] "[2] from sin by repentance, and from tribulation by the consolation of the Holy Spirit, Who, after weeping, poureth in joy. *For the Lord helpeth them that are fallen,*[3] and saith by the Prophet, *Shall they fall and not arise?* [4] and, *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*[5] *If I walk in darkness, the Lord is my light!* For although *the rulers of the darkness of this world* [6] have deceived me, and I *sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,*[7] and *my feet stumble upon the dark mountains,*[8] yet *to them who sit in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up,*[9] and *light shineth in darkness,*[10] and *the Lord is my light, and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?* [11] and I will speak to Him and will say, *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.*" [12] "He draweth me from the darkness of ignorance and from the black night of sin, and giveth a clear view of future bliss, and brighteneth the very inmost soul within." "Even if a mist have come upon me and I have been in darkness, I too shall find the light, i.e. Christ; and the Sun of Righteousness arising on my mind shall make it white." [2] *I will bear* patiently, yet gladly, *the indignation of the Lord,* "all adversity, trial, tribulation,

[1] S. Cyr. [2] Dion. [3] Ps. cxlvi. 8.
[4] Jer. viii. 4. [5] Ezek. xxxiii. 11. [6] Eph. vi. 12.
[7] Ps. cvii. 10. [8] Jer. xiii. 16. [9] Isa. ix. 2.
[10] S. John i. 5. [11] Ps. xxvii. 1. [12] Ps. cxix. 105.

her: now * shall she be trodden down [a] as the mire of the streets.

* Heb. *she shall be for a treading down.*
[a] 2 Sam. xxii. 43; Zech. x. 5.

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persecution, which can happen in this life;"[1] *because I have sinned against Him,* "and such is the enormity of sin, offered to the Majesty and dishonouring the Holiness of God, and such punishment doth it deserve in the world to come, that if we weigh it well, we shall bear with joy whatever adversity can befall us." "For although for a short time I be out of His Presence, and be *given to an undistinguishing mind,*[2] yet, seeing I suffer this rejection justly, I will bear the judgment, for I am not chastened in vain."[3] *All chastening for the present seemeth not to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby.*[4] "The soul, feeling that it hath sinned, and hath the wounds of sins, and is living in dead flesh and needs the cautery, says firmly to the Physician, 'Burn my flesh, cut open my wounds, all my imposthumes. It was my fault, that I was wounded; be it my pain, to endure such sufferings and to regain health.' And the true Physician shows to her, when whole, the cause of His treatment, and that He did rightly what He did. Then after these sufferings, the soul, being brought out of outer darkness, saith, *I shall behold His Righteousness,* and say, *Thou, O Lord, art upright; Righteous are Thy judgments, O God.*[5] But if Christ is *made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,*[6] he who, after the indignation of God, saith that he shall *see His Righteousness,* promiseth to himself the sight of Christ."[7]

[1] Dion. [2] Rom. i. 28. [3] S. Cyr. [4] Heb. xii. 11.
[5] Ps. cxix. 137. [6] 1 Cor. i. 30. [7] S. Jer.

11 *In* the day that thy [a] walls are to be built, *in* that day shall the decree be far removed.

[a] Amos ix. 11, &c.

"Then, having considered in her mind the grace of the righteousness in Christ and the overthrow of sin, the soul, in full possession of herself, crieth out, *Mine enemy shall see it, &c.* For after that Christ came unto us, justifying sinners through faith, the mouth of the ungodly One is stopped, and the Author of sin is put to shame. He hath lost his rule over us, and sin is trodden down, *like mire in the streets*, being subjected to the feet of the saints. But the blotting out of sin is the Day of Christ." [1] "And, because the end of all punishment is the beginning of good," [2] God saith to the poor, penitent, tossed soul, "*the walls* of virtues *shall be built* up in thee, and thou shalt be guarded on all sides, and the rule of thine oppressors shall be far removed, and thy King and God shall come unto thee, and *all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God.*" "All this shall be most fully seen in the Day of Judgment." [3]

11, 12. On this confession of unworthiness and trust the message of joy bursts in, with the abruptness [4] and conciseness of Hosea or Nahum :—

A day to build thy fences [i.e. cometh];
That day, far shall be the *decree;*
That day, and he shall come quite to thee; [5]

and there follows, in a longer but still remarkably measured

[1] S. Cyr. [2] S. Jer. [3] Dion.

[4] Hence the omission of the preposition עד before ערי מצור and ים, and of any preposition in the last clause, והר חהר.

[5] The three sentences, which begin with יום, are manifestly each complete in itself.

12 *In* that day *also* [a] he shall come even to thee

[a] Isa. xi. 16, xix. 23, &c., and xxvii. 13; Hosea xi. 11.

and interrupted cadence,[1] the statement of the length and breadth from which the people shall come to her :—

Up to and from Assyria and the cities of strong-land [Egypt]:
Up to and from strong-land and even to river [Euphrates];
And sea from sea, and mountain to mountain.

It is not human might or strength which God promises to restore. He had before predicted that the kingdom of the Messiah should stand, not through earthly strength.[2] He promises the restoration, not of city walls, but of the *fence* of the vineyard [3] of God, which God foretold by Isaiah that He would *break down*.[4] It is a peaceful renewal of her estate under God's protection, like that, with the promise whereof Amos closed his prophecy : *In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the*

[1] Ver. 12 is divided into four clauses, of which each consists of four words, and these in pairs :—

"Yōm hoo, ve'adeica yabo
leminni asshur, ve'arē mātsōr,
ooleminni matsōr, ve' ad nahar
veyam miyyam, vehar hahar."

[2] v. 9–13.

[3] גָּדֵר is the wall of a vineyard, Num. xxii. 24; Isa. v. 5; Ps. lxxx. 13; a wall pushed down, Ps. lxii. 4; one in which a serpent might lurk, Eccles. x. 8; a wall with gaps in it, Ezek. xiii. 5; xxii. 30; the wall of the court of the temple, Ib. xlii. 7; a fence, Ezra ix. 9. It is nowhere used of "the wall of a city." גָּדֵר too is the wall of the court of the temple, Ezek. xlii. 10; the wall of a vineyard, Prov. xxiv. 31. גְּדֵרָה is "a sheepfold," Num. xxxii. 16, 24, 36; 1 Sam. xxiv. 4; Zeph. ii. 6; fences under which locusts lodge, Nah. iii. 17; in the open field, Jer. xlix. 3; Hosea ii. 8, Heb.; fences, Ps. lxxxix. 41, Heb.

[4] Isa. v. 5.

breaches thereof.[1] This *decree*, which he says *shall be far* away, might in itself be the decree either of God or of the enemy.[2] The sense is the same, since the enemy was but the instrument of God. Yet it seems more in accordance with the language of the prophets that it should be the decree of man. For the decree of God for the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of His people was accomplished, held its course, was fulfilled. The destruction, captivity, restoration, were parts of one and the same decree of God, of which the restoration was the last accomplished in time.

The restoration was not the removal, but the complete

[1] ix. 11.

[2] חֹק is used chiefly of a "statute" of God, either those positive laws given by Moses (its common use), or such laws as God has impressed upon the physical world, Job xxvi. 10; xxviii. 26; xxxviii. 10, 33; Prov. viii. 29; Jer. v. 22; xxxi. 35, 36; of the time appointed by God for man's life, Job xiv. 5, 13; a decree of God, Job xxiii. 14; Ps. ii. 7; Zeph. ii. 2; of a portion of food appointed by God, Job xxiii. 12; Prov. xxx. 8; Ezek. xvi. 27; by man, Gen. xlvii. 22; Prov. xxxi. 15; of a statute made by man, Gen. xlvii. 26; 1 Sam. xxx. 25; a custom, Judges xi. 39 (Plur. Jer. xxxii. 11; Ezek. xx. 18); a task appointed by man, Exod. v. 14. But in all cases the idea of "appointment" is prominent; so that although חֹק expresses the law of God determining the bounds of the sea or the term of man's life, it cannot therefore signify a mere point in space or time. רחק also, with which it is united by alliteration (probably to fix the words in men's memories), is not to "expand," but to "be far off." Then also יִרְחַק, corresponding to לִבְנוֹת, which implies a future, must itself be a future, not a mere aorist or vivid present. These three observations together exclude such renderings as "the decree for thy restoration shall be promulged far and wide"; the decree of God shall not be confined to Babylon but shall extend to other countries." "In that day, the interval is distant" (Ew.); "the bound set to her will be far off," i.e. Israel shall be enlarged.

from Assyria, * and *from* the fortified cities, and

* Or, *even to.*

fulfilment, of the decree. He means then, probably, that the *decree* of the enemy, whereby he held her captive, was to remove and *be far* off, not by any agency of hers.[1] The people were to stream to her of themselves. One by one shall all thy banished, captive, scattered children be brought *quite* home *unto thee* from all parts of the earth, whither they had been driven, *from Assyria, and from strong-land.* The name *Matsor*, which he gives to Egypt, modifying its ordinary dual name *Mitsraim*, is meant at once to signify "Egypt"[2] and to mark the strength of the country; as, in fact, "Egypt was on all sides by nature strongly guarded."[3] A country which was still strong relatively to Judah would not of itself yield up its prey, but held it *straitly;* yet it should have to disgorge it. Isaiah and Hosea prophesied, in like way, the return of Israel and Judah from Assyria and from Egypt.[4] *And from strong-land even to the river* [Euphrates]; the ancient, widest boundary of the promised land;[5] *and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain.* These last are too large to be the real boundaries of the land. If understood geographically, it would be narrowing those which had just been spoken of, from Egypt to the Euphrates. Joel likens the destruction of the Northern army to the perishing of locusts in the two opposite seas, the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean;[6] but the Dead Sea was not the entire eastern boundary *of all*

[1] This is conveyed by the simple neuter, ירחק, "shall be far off."

[2] As it certainly does in Isaiah at the same date, Isa. xix. 6; xxxvii. 25 (2 Kings xix. 24).

[3] Diod. Sic. i. 31. [4] Isa. xi. 11; xxvii. 13; Hosea xi. 11.

[5] Gen. xv. 18; Exod. xxiii. 31; Deut. i. 7; xi. 24; Joshua i. 4; 1 Kings iv. 21, 24. [6] Joel ii. 20.

from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and *from* mountain to mountain.

Israel. Nor are there any mountains on the south answering to Mount Libanus on the north. Not the mountains of Edom which lay to the south-east, but *the desert*[1] was the southern boundary of Judah. In the times too of their greatest prosperity, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Syria, had been subject to them. The rule of the Messiah *from sea to sea* had already been predicted by Solomon,[2] enlarging the boundaries of the promised land to the whole compass of the world, *from the sea*, their bound westward, *to* the further encircling *sea* beyond all habitable land, in which, in fact, our continents are large islands.[3] To this Micah adds a new description, *from mountain to mountain*, including, probably, all subdivisions in our habitable earth, as the words, *sea to sea*, had embraced it as a whole. For, physically and to sight, mountains are the great natural divisions of our earth. Rivers are but a means of transit. The Euphrates and the Nile were the centres of the kingdoms which lay upon them. Each range of mountains, as it rises on the horizon, seems to present an insuperable barrier. No barrier should avail to hinder the inflow to the Gospel. As Isaiah foretold that all obstacles should be removed, *every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low*,[4] so Micah prophesies, *from mountain to mountain they shall come.*

The words are addressed as a promise and consolation to the Jews, and so, doubtless, the restoration of the Jews to

[1] Exod. xxiii. 31; Num. xxxiv. 3; Deut. xi. 24.

[2] Comp. Ps. lxxii. 8; see "Daniel the Prophet," p. 479 sqq.

[3] See Aristot. de Mundo, c. 3, in "Daniel the Prophet," p. 625. Strabo speaks as though Homer too knew the fact that the sea encircled the land, "hinting at those in east and west, in that they were washed by the ocean."

[4] Isa. xl. 4.

13 * Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate

* Or, *After that it hath been.*

their own land after the captivity is foretold here, as Micah had already foretold it.[1] But is the whole limited to this? He says, with remarkable indefiniteness, *there shall come*.[2] He does not say *who* "shall come." But he twice sets two opposite boundaries, from which men should come; and since these boundaries, not being coincident, cannot be predicted of one and the same subject, there must be two distinct incomings. The Jews were to come from those two countries, whither its people were then to be carried captive or would flee. From the boundaries of the world, the world was to come.

Thus Micah embraces in one of the prophecies, which are distinct in Isaiah, that not only God's former people should *come from Egypt and Assyria*, but that Egypt and Assyria themselves should be counted as one with Israel;[3] and while, in the first place, the restoration of Israel itself is foretold, there follows that conversion of the world, which Micah had before promised,[4] and which was the object of the restoration of Israel. This was fulfilled to Jews and heathen together, when the *dispersed* of the Jews were gathered into one in Christ, *the Son of David* according *to the flesh*, and the Gospel, *beginning at Jerusalem*, was spread abroad among all nations. The promise is thrice repeated, *It is the day*, assuring the truth thereof, as it were, in the Name of the All-Holy Trinity.

13. *Notwithstanding* [*And*] *the land* (i.e. that spoken of,

[1] Micah iv. 10.

[2] יָבוֹא, not "they shall come"; nor again is it "he," Israel, "shall come," since they were to come *to* Israel, "there shall come *to thee*"; nor is it an individual, since one person could not come from all these places.

[3] Isa. xix. 23–25. [4] iv. 1–3.

because of them that dwell therein, [a] for the fruit of their doings.

14 ¶ * Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock

[a] Jer. xxi. 14; ch. iii. 12. * Or, *Rule*, Ps. xxviii. 9; ch. v. 4.

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the land of Judah) *shall be desolate*, not through any arbitrary law or the might of her enemies, but through the sins of the people, *because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings.* Truly "the fruit of *their* doings," what they did to please themselves, of their own minds against God. As they sow, so shall they reap. This sounds almost as a riddle and contradiction beforehand; "the walls built up," "the people gathered in," and "the land desolate." Yet it was all fulfilled in the letter as well as in spirit. Jerusalem was restored; the people was gathered, first from the captivity, then to Christ; and yet the land was again desolate *through the fruit of* their *doings* who rejected Christ, and is so until this day.

The Prophet now closes with one earnest prayer;[1] to which he receives a brief answer, that God would show forth His power anew, as when He first made them His people.[2] On this, he describes vividly the awed submission of the world to *their* God,[3] and closes with a thanksgiving of marvelling amazement at the greatness and completeness of the forgiving mercy of God,[4] ascribing all to His free goodness.[5]

14. *Feed Thy people with Thy rod.* The day of final deliverance was still a great way off. There was a weary interval before them of chastisement, suffering, captivity. So Micah lays down his pastoral office by committing his people to Him Who was their true and abiding Shepherd. Who that has had the pastoral office, has not thought, as

[1] v. 14. [2] v. 15. [3] v. 16, 17.
[4] v. 18, 19. [5] v. 20.

of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily *in* [a] the

[a] Isa. xxxvii. 24.

the night drew nigh *in which no man can work,* "what will be after him?" Micah knew and foretold the outline. It was for his people a *passing through the valley of the shadow of death.* Micah then commits them to Him, Who had Himself committed them to him, Who alone could guide them through it. It is a touching parting with his people; a last guidance of those whom he had taught, reproved, rebuked in vain, to Him the Good Shepherd Who led Israel like a flock. The *rod* is at times the shepherd's staff,[1] although more frequently the symbol of chastisement. God's chastisement of His people is an austere form of His love. So He says, *If his children forsake My law, I will visit their offences with a rod and their sin with scourges: nevertheless My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from them.*[2]

The flock of Thine inheritance. So Moses had appealed to God, *Destroy not Thy people and Thine inheritance which Thou hast redeemed through Thy greatness—They are Thy people and Thine inheritance;*[3] and Solomon, in his dedication-prayer, that on their repentance in their captivity God would forgive His people, *for they be Thy people and Thine inheritance which Thou broughtest forth out of Egypt;*[4] and Asaph, *O Lord, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance;*[5] and again, *Why doth Thine anger smoke against the sheep of Thy pasture? Remember the tribe of Thine inheritance which Thou hast redeemed;*[6] and Joel, *Spare Thy people and give not Thine heritage to reproach;*[7] and a Psalmist, *They break in pieces Thy people, O Lord, and afflict Thine heritage;*[8] and Isaiah, *Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of Thine inherit-*

[1] שִׁבְטֵי, Lev. xxvii. 32; Ps. xxiii. 4.
[2] Ps. lxxxix. 31, 33.
[3] Deut. ix. 26, 29.
[4] 1 Kings viii. 51.
[5] Ps. lxxix. 1.
[6] Ps. lxxiv. 1, 2.
[7] Joel ii. 17.
[8] Ps. xciv. 5.

ance.[1] The appeal excludes all merits. Not for any deserts of theirs (for these were but evil) did the prophets teach them to pray; but because they were God's property. It was His Name which would be dishonoured in them; it was His work which would seemingly come to nothing; it was He Who would be thought powerless to save. Again, it is not God's way to leave half-done what He has begun. *Jesus having loved His own which were in the world, loved them unto the end.*[2] God's love in creating us and making us His, is the earnest, if we will, of His everlasting love. We have been the objects of His everlasting thought, of His everlasting love. Though we have forfeited all claim to His love, He has not forfeited the work of His Hands; Jesus has not forfeited the price of His Blood. So holy men have prayed: "I believe that Thou hast redeemed me by Thy Blood: permit not the price of the Ransom to perish."[3] "O Jesu Christ, my only Saviour, let not Thy most bitter Passion and Death be lost or wasted in me, miserable sinner!"[4]

Which dwell solitarily, or *alone*. Micah uses the words of Balaam, when he had been constrained by God to bless Israel: *The people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations.*[5] Moses had repeated them, *Israel shall dwell in safety alone.*[6] This aloneness among other nations,

[1] Isa. lxiii. 17. [2] S. John xiii. 1.

[3] Bp. Andrewes Preces quotid. Græc. p. 150. Tracts for the Times, No. 88, p. 66.

[4] Paradise for the Christian Soul. On the Passion, c. 5.

[5] Num. xxiii. 9.

[6] Deut. xxxiii. 28. In both cases, as in Micah, שׁכן is used; as also in Jer. xlix. 31, of Hazor dwelling in security alone. The idiom, ישב בדד, "sit alone," is different. It occurs first of the separation of the leper, "he shall sit alone, without the camp shall his dwelling be" (מושבו), Lev. xiii. 46; then of an individual in sorrow, Jer. xv. 17; Lam. iii. 28; and, in one case, of the deserted city personified, Lam. i. 1.

wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.

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then, was a blessing, springing from God's being in the midst of them,[1] the deeds which He did for them,[2] the law which He gave them.[3] So Moses prayed, *Wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight?* is it *not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people, from all the people that* are *on the face of the earth.*[4] It was, then, a separate appeal to God by all His former loving-kindness, whereby He had severed and elected His people for Himself.

In the wood, in the midst of Carmel. God *turneth a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water and dry ground into watersprings.*[5] Isaiah at the same time used the like image, that [6] *Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field* [Carmel], *and the fruitful field* [Carmel] *shall be esteemed as a forest.*[7] The wild forest was to be like the rich domestic exuberance of Carmel.[8] He would say, "Feed Thy people in Babylon, which is to them a wild homeless tract, that it may be to them as their own peaceful Carmel." Without God, all the world is a wilderness; with God, the wilderness is Paradise.

Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead. The former words were a prayer for their restoration. Gilead and Bashan were the great pasture-countries of Palestine,[9] "a wide table-

[1] Exod. xxxiii. 16; Deut. iv. 7.
[2] Exod. xxxiv. 10; Deut. iv. 34.
[3] Deut. iv. 8, 33.
[4] Exod. xxxiii. 16.
[5] Ps. cvii. 34, 35.
[6] Isa. xxix. 17.
[7] והכרמל ליער יחשב. The phrase recurs Isa. xxxii. 15, except that the Kethib omits the article, which makes the contrast of יער and כרמל exactly the same as in Micah.
[8] See on Amos i. 2.
[9] See on Amos i. 3; iv. 1.

land, with undulating downs clothed with rich grass throughout,"[1] where the cattle ranged freely. They were the first possessions, which God had bestowed upon Israel; the first which they forfeited. Micah prays that God, Who protected them in their desolation, would restore and protect them in the green pasture where he placed them. They are a prayer still to *the Good Shepherd* Who *laid* down His *life for His sheep*,[2] our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would feed His flock whom He has redeemed, who have been *given* to Him as *an inheritance*,[3] *the little flock*,[4] to which *it is* the *Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom*, which cleaveth to Him and shall be heirs with Him.[5] "Christ feedeth His own with a rod, guiding them gently, and repressing by gentle fears the tendency of believers to listlessness. He *bruiseth* as *with a rod of iron*, not them, but the rebellious, disobedient, and proud, who receive not the faith; believers He instructs and forms tenderly, *feeds them among the lilies*,[6] and leads them into good pastures and rich places, namely, the Divinely-inspired Scriptures, making the hidden things thereof clear through the Spirit to those of understanding,

[1] Rev. G. H. Palmer in Dr. Stanley, Pal. p. 320. See also Porter's Handbook, p. 307 sq. "One can scarcely get over the impression that he is roaming through some English park. The graceful hills, the rich vales, the luxuriant herbage, the bright wild-flowers, the plantations of evergreen oak, pine, and arbutus, now a tangled thicket, and now sparsely scattered over the gentle slope, as if intended to reveal its beauty, the little rivulets fringed with oleander, &c.—such are the features of the mountains of Gilead," p. 310. "The country from *Jerash* to *Wady Gâbes* [Jabesh Gilead] eight hours, resembles in scenery that from es-Salt to Jerash. We have the thickly wooded hills, the deep and fertile valleys, and the luxuriant pasturage in every part of it," p. 316. See also Thomson, The Land and the Book, i. 304.

[2] S. John x. 11, 15. [3] Ps. ii. 8. [4] S. Luke xii. 32.
[5] Rom. viii. 17. [6] Cant. vi. 3.

15 [a] According to the days of thy coming out of

[a] Ps. lxviii. 22 and lxxviii. 12.

that they *may grow up unto Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ*,[1] with minds well-fed and nourished and gladdened with all spiritual delights. But the chosen and elect *dwell solitarily*, being apart from the rest, who think only of the things of earth, and give themselves to the pleasures of sense. So then these, having the mind at rest, freed from the vain and abominable tumults, are placed apart as *in a wood* and in a *mountain*. By the *wood* you may understand, the rich and varied and solid instruction (as it were, trees and flowers) both in doctrine and life; by the *mountain*, what is high and lofty. For none of the wisdom, accounted of in the Church, is low. They are *fed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old*, rich pastures; for the mind of the holy is beautified, delighting itself in the contemplation of the inspired Scriptures, and filled, as it were, with a certain richness, and shares without stint all excellence in thought or in deed; and that, not for a brief and narrow season, but for ever. For what gladdeneth the flesh falleth therewith and fadeth and hasteth away like a shadow; but the participation of the good things from above and of the Spirit, stretcheth out along endless ages." [2]

15. *According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt.* God answers the prayer, beginning with its closing words.[3] Micah had prayed, "Turn Thy people *like the days of old*;" [4] God answers, "*like the days of thy coming* [4] *out of the land of Egypt.*" Micah had said, in the name of his

[1] Eph. iv. 15. [2] S. Cyr. [3] Casp.

[4] כִּימֵי עוֹלָם ver. 14, כִּימֵי צֵאתְךָ ver. 15. The word עולם is necessarily restrained to time, in that it relates to man's past, and *that*, according to the context, a limited past, the time of their coming out of Egypt. This does not interfere with its use as to eternity. See on Micah v. 2.

the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous *things*.

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people, *I shall behold His righteousness;*[1] God answers, *I will make him to behold marvellous things.* The word *marvellous things*,[2] was used of God's great marvels in the physical world,[3] or the marvellous mercies of His Providence towards individuals or nations,[4] and especially of those great miracles, which were accumulated at the deliverance from Egypt,[5] and the entrance of the promised land[6] which was its completion. The reference to the Exodus must have led them to think of actual miracles; since, in regard to the Exodus, it is used of nothing else. But there were no miracles at the return from the captivity. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion*, said a Psalmist of the returned people, *we were like them that dream. The Lord hath done great things for us; we are glad.*[7] Great things, but not miraculous. The promise then kept the people looking onward, until He came, *a Prophet mighty in word and deed*,[8] as to Whom S. Peter appealed to the people, that He was *approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know;*[9] Who gave also to them who believed on Him power to do *greater works than* He *did*, through His own power, *because* He went *to* His *Father;*[10] and when they believed, He *shewed to him*, viz. to the whole people gathered into the One Church, Jew and Gentile, yet more *marvellous things*,

[1] Ver. 9. Casp. [2] נִפְלָאוֹת. [3] Job v. 9; xxxvii. 5, 14.
[4] Ps. ix. 2; xxvi. 7; lxxi. 17; lxxii. 18, &c.
[5] Exod. iii. 20; Judges vi. 13; Neh. ix. 17; Ps. lxxviii. 4, 11, 32; cv. 2, 5; cvi. 7, 22.
[6] Exod. xxxiv. 10. Of the passage of the Jordan, Joshua iii. 5. [7] Ps. cxxvi. 1, 3. [8] S. Luke xxiv. 19.
[9] Acts ii. 22. [10] S. John xiv. 12.

16 ¶ The nations [a] shall see and be confounded at

[a] Isa. xxvi. 11.

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things every way more marvellous and beyond nature than those of old, *the unsearchable riches of Christ, the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God.*[1]

16. *The nations shall see.* God had answered what He would give to His own people, to *see*. Micah takes up the word,[2] and says, what effect this sight should have upon the enemies of God and of His people. The world should still continue to be divided between the people of God and their adversaries. Those who are converted pass from the one to the other; but the contrast remains. Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, pass away or become subject to other powers; but the antagonism continues. *The nations* are they, who, at each time, waste, oppress, are arrayed against, the people of God. When the Gospel came into the world the whole world was arrayed against it. These then, he says, *shall see*, i.e. *the marvellous works* of God, which God should show His people, *and be ashamed at*, i.e. *because of all their might*, their own might. They put forth their whole might, and it failed them against the *marvellous* might of God. They should array might against might, and *be ashamed* at the failure of *all their might.*[3] The word *all* is very emphatic;

[1] Eph. iii. 8, 9.

[2] אַרְאֶנּוּ, end of ver. 15; יִרְאוּ, beginning of ver. 16. Casp.

[3] This is the force of בּוֹשׁ with מִן. מִן designates, as usual, the cause and source of the shame; and mostly with this aggravation, that they had trusted in it, and it had failed them. See Hosea iv. 19, "*they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices;* x. 6, *because of their own counsel*"; "They shall be afraid and *ashamed because of Ethiopia, their expectation, and of Egypt, their glory,*" Isa. xx. 5; "*because of the oaks, which ye have desired,*" Ib. i. 29; "*thou shalt be ashamed because of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed because*

all their might: [a] they shall lay *their* hand upon *their* mouth, their ears shall be deaf.

[a] Job xxi. 5 and xxix. 9.

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it implies that they had put forth *all*, and that *all* had failed them, and proved to be weakness. So the heathen might was often put to shame and gnashed its teeth, when it could avail nothing against the strength to endure which God gave to His martyrs. Its strength to inflict and to crush was baffled before the hidden might of God's Spirit. *They shall lay their hand upon their mouth*, in token that they were reduced to silence, having no more to say;[1] for he promised, *I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist;*[2] and they had to own, *indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them, and we cannot deny it*[3] *Their ears shall be deaf;* they shall be silent, as though they had heard nothing, as if they were both dumb and deaf.[4] Yet it seems too that they are wilfully deaf, *shutting their ears* out of envy and hatred, that they might not hear what great things God had done for His people, nor hear the voice of truth and be converted and healed.

of Assyria," Jer. ii. 36; "Moab shall be *ashamed because of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed because of Bethel their confidence*, Ib. xlviii. 13; add xii. 13. The idiom itself, מִגְבּוּרָתָם בּוֹשִׁים, "*ashamed because of their might*," occurs in Ezek. xxxii. 30, of the nations, which had perished in war. In a few cases, the idiom is used of the source of shame, where the idea of previous trust in them is less prominent, as in Ezek. xxxvi. 32; Zeph. iii. 11. But here, this is involved in the subject itself, and is illustrated by Ezek. xxxii. 30.

[1] See the use of the idiom in Judges xviii. 19; Job xxi. 5; xxix. 9; xl. 4; Prov. xxx. 32.

[2] S. Luke xxi. 15: comp. Acts v. 29. [3] Acts iv. 16.

[4] As in Ps. xxxviii. 14, "I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs."

17 They shall lick the [a] dust like a serpent, [b] they

[a] Ps. lxxii. 9; Isa. xlix. 23. [b] Ps. xviii. 45.

"The nations and the Emperors of the nations saw, Jews and Gentiles saw, and were ashamed at all their might, because their might, great as it was accounted, upheld by laws and arms, could not overcome the mighty works, which the Good Shepherd did among His people or flock by His rod, i.e. by His power, through weak and despised persons, the aged, or oftentimes even by boys and girls. They were then ashamed at all their might which could only touch the *earthen vessels*,[1] but could not take away the *treasure* which was in them. What shall I say of the wisdom of those same nations? Of this too they were ashamed, as he adds, *They shall put their hands upon their mouths*. For, in comparison with the heavenly wisdom, which spake by them and made their tongues eloquent, dumb was all secular eloquence, owning by its silence that it was convicted and confounded." [2]

17. *They shall lick the dust like a* [*the*] *serpent.* To *lick the dust*, by itself, pictures the extreme humility of persons who cast themselves down to the very earth.[3] To lick it "like *the* serpent" seems rather to represent the condition of those who share the serpent's doom,[4] whose lot, viz. earth and things of earth, they had chosen.[2] *They shall move out of their holes*, or, better, *shall tremble* (i.e. "come tremblingly") *out of their close places*,[5] whether these be *strong places* or *prisons*, as the word, varied in one vowel,[6] means. If it be

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 7. [2] Rup.

[3] As in Ps. lxxii. 9; Isa. xlix. 23.

[4] Gen. iii. 14; Isa. lxv. 25.

[5] So our Version renders the word in Ps. xviii. 45; 2 Sam. xxii. 46.

[6] סֶגֶר (masc.), Isa. xxiv. 22; xlii. 7; Ps. cxlii. 8; here, and in Ps. xviii. 46, סְגֵרֶת (fem.).

shall move out of their holes like * worms of the

* Or, *creeping things.*

strong places, it means that "the enemies of God's people should, in confusion and tumultously with fear, leave their strongholds, wherein they thought to be secure, not able to lift themselves up against God and those by Him sent against them."[1] *Like worms of the earth*, lit. *creeping things*, or, as we say, *reptiles*,[2] contemptuously. *They shall be afraid of*, or rather *come trembling to, the Lord our God;* it is not said *their*, but *our* God, Who hath *done so great things for us. And shall fear because of* [lit. *from*] *Thee*, O Lord, of Whom they had before said, *Where is the Lord thy God?*

It is doubtful whether these last words express a "servile fear," whereby a man turns away and flees *from*[3] the person or thing which he fears, or whether they simply describe fear of God,[4] the first step towards repentance. In Hosea's words, *they shall fear towards the Lord and His goodness*,[5] the addition, *and His goodness*, determines the character of the fear. In Micah it is not said that the fear brings them into any relation to God. He is not spoken of as becoming, anyhow, *their* God, and Micah closes by a thanksgiving for God's pardoning mercy, not to them but to His people.

And so the Prophet ends, as he began, with the judgments of God; to those who would repent, chastisement; to the impenitent, punishment: "sentencing Samaria, guilty and not repenting,"[6] to perpetual captivity; "to Jerusalem,

[1] Poc.

[2] The idiom occurs besides only in Deut. xxxii. 24, with the variation only of עָפָר for אֶרֶץ.

[3] יראּ with מן, Ps. iii. 7; xxvii. 1; Job v. 21; see Ges. Thes. p. 804.

[4] יראּ with מן is used of a fear of God, whereby one is kept from evil, Lev. xix. 14. Yet also generally of fear of God, Ps. xxxiii. 8.

[5] Hosea iii. 5. [6] Rup.

earth : [a] they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee.

[a] Jer. xxxiii. 9.

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guilty but repenting, promising restoration. So from the beginning of the world did God ; so doth He ; so shall He unto the end. So did He show Himself to Cain and Abel, who both, as we all, sinned in Adam. Cain, being impenitent, He wholly cast away ; Abel, being penitent," *and through faith offering a better sacrifice than Cain*, and "*bringing forth fruits worthy of repentance*, He accepted. So He hath foreshown as to the end."[1] "And that we may know how uniformly our Judge so distinguisheth, at the very moment of His own Death while hanging between the two thieves, the one, impenitent and blaspheming, He left ; to the other, penitent and confessing, He opened the gate of paradise ; and, soon after, leaving the Jewish people unrepentant, He received the repentance of the Gentiles."[2] Thus the Prophet parts with both out of sight ; the people of God, feeding on the rich bounty and abundance of God, and His *marvellous* gifts of grace above and beyond nature, multiplied to them above all the wonders of old time ; the enemies of God's people looking on, not to admire, but to be ashamed, not to be healthfully ashamed, but to be wilfully deaf to the voice of God. For, however to *lay the hand on the mouth* might be a token of reverent silence, the *deafness of the ears* can hardly be other than the emblem of hardened obstinacy. What follows, then, seems more like the unwilling creeping-forth into the Presence of God, when they cannot keep away, than conversion. It seems to picture the reprobate, who would not *hear the Voice of the Son of God and live*,[3] but who, in the end, shall be forced to hear it out of their *close places* or *prisons*, i.e. the grave,

[1] S. Matt. xxv. [2] Rup. [3] S. John v. 25.

18 [a] Who *is* a God like unto thee, that [b] pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of [c] the

[a] Exod. xv. 11. [b] Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Jer. l. 20. [c] Micah iv. 7 and v. 3, 7, 8.

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and come forth in fear, when they shall *say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.*[1] Thus the Prophet brings us to the close of all things, the gladness and joy of God's people, the terror of His enemies, and adds only the song of thanksgiving of all the redeemed.

18. *Who is a God* (and, as the word means, *A Mighty God*) *like unto Thee?* He saith not, *Who hast made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is:*[2] nor, *Who telleth the number of the stars; and calleth them all by their names;*[3] nor, *Who by His strength setteth fast the mountains and is girded about with power;*[4] but Who forgivest! For greater is the work of Redemption than the work of Creation. *That pardoneth,* and *beareth* and *taketh away* also, *and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage,* i.e. His heritage, which is a remnant still when *the rest are blinded;*[5] and this, not of its merits but of His mercy; since it is not His nature to *retain His anger for ever;* not for anything in them, but *because He delighteth in mercy;* as He saith, *I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever.*[6] *I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*[7] "For although God for a time is angry with His elect, chastening them mercifully in this life, yet in the end He hath compassion on them, giving them everlasting consolations."[8]

Moses, after the completion of his people's deliverance at the Red Sea, used the like appeal to God, in unmingled joy.

[1] S. Luke xxiii. 30; Rev. vi. 16. [2] Exod. xx. 11.
[3] Ps. cxlvii. 4. [4] Ps. lxv. 6. [5] Rom. xi. 7.
[6] Jer. iii. 12. [7] Isa. xliii. 25. [8] Dion.

remnant of his heritage? [a] he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth *in* mercy.

[a] Ps. ciii. 9; Isa. lvii. 16; Jer. iii. 5.

Then the thanksgiving ran, *glorious in holiness, awful in praises, doing wonders.*[1] Now, it ran in a more subdued, yet even deeper tone, taken from God's revelation of Himself after that great transgression on Mount Sinai, *forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.*[2] With this, Micah identified his own name.[3] This was the one message which he loved above all to proclaim; of this, his own name was the herald to his people in his day. *Who is like the Lord*, the Pardoner of sin, the Redeemer from its guilt, the Subduer of its power? For no false god was ever such a claim made. The heathen gods were symbols of God's workings in nature; they were, at best, representatives of His government and of His displeasure at sin. But, being the creatures of man's mind, they could not freely pardon, for man dared not ascribe to them the attribute of a freely-pardoning mercy, for which he dared not hope. *Who is a God like to Thee*, mighty, not only to destroy but to pardon? is the wondering thanksgiving of time, the yet greater amazement of eternity, as eternity shall unveil the deep blackness of sin over against the light of God, and we, seeing God, as He is, shall see what that Holiness is, against which we sinners sinned. The soul, which is truly penitent, never wearies of the wondering love, *Who is a God like unto Thee?*

19. *He will turn again*, Who seemed to be turned away from us when we were turned away from Him.[4] *He will*

[1] Exod. xv. 11.

[2] נֹשֵׂא עָוֹן וָפֶשַׁע, Exod. xxxiv. 7; Micah, dividing the clauses, inserted עֹבֵר עַל before פֶּשַׁע. Casp.

[3] See Introduction, p. 2. [4] See Joel ii. 14.

19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

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subdue, or *trample under foot*, our worst enemy, *our iniquities*, as He saith, *He shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*.[1] Hitherto, sinful passions had not rebelled only, but had had the mastery over us. Sin subdued man; it was his lord, a fierce tyrant over him; *he* could not subdue *it*. Holy Scripture says emphatically of man under the law, that he was *sold under sin*,[2] a slave under a hard master, oppressed, weighed down, and unable to throw off the bondage. *We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin*;[3] *the Scripture hath concluded all under sin*.[4] Under the Gospel, God, he says, would subdue sin "under *us*," and make it, as it were, our "footstool."[5] It is a Gospel before the Gospel. God would pardon; and *He*, not *we*, would subdue sin to us. He would bestow, "of sin the double cure, Save us from its guilt and power."[6] *Not I, but the grace of God, which was with me*.[7]

And Thou wilt cast—not some ("for it is impious to look for a half-pardon from God"[8]), but—*all their sins into the depths*[9] *of the sea*, so that as in the passage of the Red Sea there was not one Egyptian left of those who pursued His people, so neither shall there be one sin, which, through Baptism and on Repentance, shall not through His free

[1] Rom. xvi. 20.
[2] Ib. vii. 14.
[3] Ib. iii. 9.
[4] Gal. iii. 22.
[5] כֶּבֶשׁ. "footstool," 2 Chron. ix. 18 (as in Syr. Ch.), from the same root.
[6] Hymn, "Rock of Ages."
[7] 1 Cor. xv. 10.
[8] S. Amb. ap. Alb.
[9] מְצוֹלוֹת doubtless is meant to refer back to מְצוֹלֹת, Exod. xv. 5, and so to suggest the image of the destruction at the Red Sea and its completeness.

20 [a] Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and*

[a] Luke i. 72, 73.

mercy be pardoned. As they, which *sank as lead in the mighty waters*,[1] never again rose, so shall the sins, unless revived by us, not rise against us to condemnation, but shall in the Day of Judgment be sunk in the abyss of hell, as if they had never been.

20. *Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob* and *the mercy to Abraham.* What was free *mercy to Abraham*, became, when God had once promised it, His *truth*. *Abraham* also stands for all those, who in him and his Seed should be blessed, those who were *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world*,[2] in no covenant or relation with God, as well as those who were the children of the faith; heathen, as well as Jews. *Jacob* represents those who were immediately his children, such of the children of Israel as were also the true Israel and *children of faithful Abraham.* In both ways the gift to Abraham was *mercy*, to Jacob, *truth*. So also S. Paul saith, "Jesus Christ was a Minister of the circumcision for the *truth* of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His mercy*." [3] Yet *mercy and truth*,[4] together, *are all the paths of the Lord;* they *met together* [5] in Christ; yea Christ Himself is full of Mercy as well as *Truth:* [6] and woe were it to that soul to whom He were Truth without mercy. "For to be saved, we look not so much to the truth of the Judge as to the mercy of the Redeemer." [7] And *mercy*, in the counsel of God, reacheth wider than *truth;* for *truth* is given to Jacob, the father of one nation, Israel; but

[1] Exod. xv. 10. [2] Eph. ii. 12. [3] Rom. xv. 8, 9.
[4] Ps. xxv. 10. [5] Ps. lxxxv. 10.
[6] S. John i. 14. [7] Rup.

mercy to Abraham, *the father of many nations.*[1] Isaac, it may be, is not here mentioned, because all to whom the blessing should come are already spoken of in Jacob and Abraham; in Jacob, all to whom the promise was first made; in Abraham, all nations of the world who should be blessed in his Seed, through the mercy of God overflowing the bounds of that covenant. Isaac is, in his sacrifice, chiefly a type of our Lord Himself.

Which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers. [2] *That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation.*

From the days of old. [3] From eternity, in the counsel of God; in promise, from the foundation of the world, as is said in the hymn of Zacharias,[4] *As He spake by the mouth of His holy Prophets, which have been since the world began.* [5] The inspired hymns of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of Zachariah take up the words of the prophet, and show that they are already fulfilled in Christ, although they shall be more and more fulfilled unto the world's end, as Jew and Gentile are brought into His fold; *He remembering His mercy, as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.*[6] *To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He sware to our father Abraham that He would grant unto us.*[7]

"I too," S. Jerome subjoins, "sealing the labour of my little work by calling upon the Lord, will say at the close of this tract, *O God, who is like unto Thee?* Take away the iniquity of Thy servant, pass by the sin of my decayed soul, and send not Thine anger upon me, nor rebuke me in Thy indignation; for Thou art full of pity and great are Thy mercies. Return and have mercy upon me; drown mine

[1] Gen. xvii. 5; Rom. iv. 17.
[2] Heb. vi. 18.
[3] Alb.
[4] S. Luke i. 70.
[5] Poc.
[6] S. Luke i. 54, 55.
[7] Ib. i. 72–74.

the mercy to Abraham, [a] which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.

[a] Ps. cv. 9, 10.

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iniquities, and cast them into the depth of the sea, that the bitterness of sin may perish in the bitter waters. Grant the truth which Thou didst promise to Thy servant Jacob, and the mercy which Thou didst pledge to Abraham Thy friend, and free my soul, as Thou didst sware to my fathers in the days of old: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.*[1] *Then shall mine enemy see and be* crowned with *confusion,* who now saith unto me, *where is now thy God?*" Amen, Amen, O Good Lord Jesu.

[1] Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

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